This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HN 2Z4C 7

F443.70
KF 929 A

Harvard College Library.

THE PARKMAN COLLECTION.

BEQUEATHED BY

FRANCIS PARKMAN,
(H. C. 1844).

Received January 17, 1894.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

TH

Digitized by Google

HISTORY OF FRANCE,

FROM

THE MOST REMOTE PERIOD TO 1789,

BY

HENRI MARTIN.

Pulvis veterum renovabitur.

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE FOURTH PARIS EDITION,

By MARY L. BOOTH.

VOLUME XVI.

BOSTON:
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY.
1866.

Digitized by Google

This work has received the Great Gobert Prize from the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres and the French Academy.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

C E

Digitized by Google

MARTIN'S HISTORY OF FRANCE.

THE

DECLINE OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

By HENRI MARTIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FOURTH PARIS EDITION,

By MARY L. BOOTH.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY.
1866.

Digitized by Google

Fr 6443.10
Park. 3.40
C Harvard College Library
Bequest of
FRANCIS PARKMAN
17 Jan. 1894

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

GEO. C. RAND & AVERY,
Stereotypers and Printers, 3 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

CHAPTER I.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (*Continued.*)

Page

VOLTAIRE AND THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS. Voltaire at Berlin and Ferney. *Candide.* Developments of the Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century. Metaphysics of Condillac. Ethics of Helvetius. Progress of the Sciences. D'Alembert. Natural Sciences. BUFFON. NATURAL HISTORY. *History and Theory of the Earth. Epochs of Nature. History of Animals.* NATURALISM. DIDEROT. His First Writings. His Association with D'Alembert. Universality of Diderot. *The Encyclopædia. The Preliminary Discourse.* Æsthetics of Diderot. MATERIALISM. (1748–1774.) 1

CHAPTER II.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (*Continued.*)

ROUSSEAU. Spiritualism revived through Sentiment. Religious and Democratic Philosophy. Origin and Youth of Rousseau. *Dissertation on the Sciences. Dissertation on Inequality. Essay on the Origin of Languages. The New Héloïse.* ÉMILE. THE SAVOYARD VICAR. SOCIAL CONTRACT. *Letters from the Mountain.* (1749–1767.) 54

CHAPTER III.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (*Continued.*)

ROUSSEAU AND THE PHILOSOPHERS. THE ECONOMISTS. Rousseau's Influence upon Writers. Voltaire modified by Rousseau. Reforms demanded by Voltaire. Voltaire and the Parliaments. Calas. Resistance of Materialistic Philosophy. Atheistic Propaganda of D'Holbach. Communism. Morelli. Mabli: his Political and Social Ideas. Rousseau's Influence on Manners and Arts. Grétri. Gluck. Louis David. Political Economy. PHYSIOCRATS. Quesnai. Gournai. TURGOT, the Economist and Philosopher. (1762–1774.) 119

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

Louis XV. (*Concluded.*)

Page

Choiseul's Ministry. Trial of Father La Valette. Official Reports concerning the Constitutions of the Jesuits. The Jesuits suppressed in France. Abolition of the Order by Pope Clement XIV. Contention between the Court and the Parliaments. Death of Madame de Pompadour. Invasion of the Economists in Politics. First Experiments of Commercial and Industrial Freedom. New Quarrels with the Parliaments. Trial of La Chalotais. Death of the Dauphin. Choiseul's Projects for the Revival of France. Improvements in the Army and the Marine. Acquisition of Corsica. Paoli. Affairs of Poland. Catharine and Frederick II. *Confederation of Bar.* Massacres in the Ukraine. The Poles and J. J. Rousseau. Dumouriez in Poland. War between Russia and Turkey. Projects of Prussia and Austria for the Partition of Poland. Marriage of the New Dauphin to *Marie Antoinette.* Terrai, Comptroller-General. System of Bankruptcy. Fall of Choiseul. Reign of Madame du Barri. Triumvirate of Maupeou, Terrai, and D'Aiguillon. Destruction of the Parliaments. Russia accedes to the Plans of Frederick II. Partition of Poland. The Minister, D'Aiguillon, abandons Poland. England an Accomplice. *Pact of Famine.* The King a Monopolizer. Death of Louis XV. (1763–1774.) . 179

CHAPTER V.

Louis XVI. and Turgot.

Louis XVI. and his Family. Maurepas summoned to Power. Fall of the *Triumvirate.* Turgot Comptroller-General. His Plans of Reform: the *Great Municipality of the Kingdom,* etc. Reëstablishment of the Parliaments. Economic Reforms. Freedom of the Grain-trade. Attack of Necker upon the Plans of Turgot. Coalition of the Privileged Classes against Turgot. The Philosophers divided on the Economic Question. Voltaire the Champion of Turgot. *The Flour War.* The Sedition fomented by the Privileged Classes repressed. Celebrated Remonstrances of the Court of Aids against the Fiscal System. Their Author, Malesherbes, summoned to the Ministry. Numerous Economic Ameliorations. Military Reforms of the Count de Saint-Germain. Abolition of the *Corvée.* Abolition of Wardenships and Masterships of Trade Corporations. Establishment of the Freedom of Commerce and Manufactures. Resistance of the Parliament, and Violent Attacks on Turgot. Bed of Justice. Freedom of the Wine-trade. The Princes, Maurepas, the Court, and the Parliament unite against Turgot. Fall of Turgot and Malesherbes. (1774–1776.) 279

CHAPTER VI.

Louis XVI. (*Continued.*)

American War. Opening of the Era of the Revolution. Clugni, Comptroller-General. Reaction. The Lottery. Reëstablishment of the *Corvée.* Reëstablishment of the Trade Wardenships and Masterships. Death of Clugni. The Reaction arrested. Necker, Director of Finance. Reëstablishment of

Digitized by Google

Page

Order in the Accounts and of the Public Credit. Divers Reforms. Voltaire at Paris. Death of Voltaire and Rousseau. AMERICAN REVOLUTION. DECLARATION OF RIGHTS. Public Opinion aroused in Favor of the *Insurgents*. Curious Rôle of Beaumarchais. Indirect Aid furnished by the Government to the *Insurgents*. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES. La Fayette in America. The Government drawn on by Public Opinion. Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States. Rupture with England. Naval Battle of Ushant. India neglected. Loss of Pondicherry. D'Estaing's Expedition to America. Capture of Dominica. Loss of St. Lucia. Conquest of Senegal. Mediation of France between Austria and Prussia. Peace of Teschen. Alliance between Spain and France. Capture of St. Vincent and Grenada. Repulse at Savannah. Exploits of the French Navy. Invasion of Florida by the Spaniards. Success of Guichen against Rodney. Rochambeau's Expedition to the United States. Acts of Violence of the British Navy against Neutrals. *Armed Neutrality of the North*. England attacks Holland, and invades her Colonies. Conquest of Minorca. Capture of Tobago. Capitulation of Yorktown: a British Army surrenders to the Franco-Americans. Recapture of the Dutch Colonies in America. Taking of St. Christopher. Fall of Necker. Loss of a Naval Battle in the West Indies. Fruitless Attack on Gibraltar. Tardy Efforts in India. SUFFREN. *Six* Naval Battles in Two Years. Recapture of Trincomalee. Bussi sent back to India. Hyder-Ali and Tippo-Saib. Suffren saves Bussi, besieged in Goudelore by the English. He is arrested by Peace. New Treaties of Paris. England recognizes the Independence of the United States. France retains none of her Conquests except Tobago and Senegal, and recovers what she had lost during the War. Spain keeps Minorca and the Floridas. (1776–1783.) . 346

CHAPTER VII.

LOUIS XVI. (*Continued.*)

NECKER'S MINISTRY. Financial Condition of France, under Necker and his Successors, to 1783. Economic and Judicial Improvements. Provincial Assemblies. *Official Report of the Finances*. Dismission of Necker. Reaction. Death of Maurepas. Calonne called to the Finances. MANNERS, IDEAS, LETTERS, AND SCIENCES after the American War. The Circle of the Queen. *The Marriage of Figaro*. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Lagrange. LAVOISIER. The Aerostats. Condorcet. Mystical Movement. Mesmer. Saint-Martin. Freemasonry. MIRABEAU. (1778–1789.) 443

CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS XVI. (*Concluded.*)

LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY. Ministry of CALONNE. Financial Chaos. *The Diamond Necklace*. Calonne attempts to undertake Reform in his Turn. ASSEMBLY OF THE NOTABLES. Acknowledgment of the Deficit. Fall of Calonne. Ministry of Brienne. Renewal of the Dissensions between the Crown and the Parliaments. The Parliament of Paris demands the STATES-GENERAL. Humiliation Abroad. Affairs of Holland. Brienne imitates Mau-

Digitized by Google

Page

peou's Opposition to the Parliaments. The *Plenary Court*. The Nobility supports the Parliaments. Disturbances in Brittany, Béarn, and Dauphiny. Assembly of Vizille. Promise of the STATES-GENERAL for 1789. Beginning of Bankruptcy. Fall of Brienne. Recall of Necker. Second Assembly of the Notables. Great Movement of the Political Press. Contest between the Third Estate and the Privileged Orders. Pamphlet of Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?* Disturbances in Brittany. MIRABEAU in Provence. The Elections. THE CAHIERS. Opening of the STATES-GENERAL. The Third Estate declares itself the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. END OF THE ANCIENT RÉGIME AND OF THE MONARCHY. (1783–1789.) 487

Digitized by Google

DECLINE OF THE MONARCHY.

CHAPTER I.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (CONTINUED.)

VOLTAIRE AND THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS. Voltaire at Berlin and Ferney. *Candide.* Developments of the Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century. Metaphysics of Condillac. Ethics of Helvetius. Progress of the Sciences. D'Alembert. Natural Sciences. BUFFON. NATURAL HISTORY. *History and Theory of the Earth. Epochs of Nature. History of Animals.* NATURALISM. DIDEROT. His First Writings. His Association with D'Alembert. Universality of Diderot. *The Encyclopædia. The Preliminary Discourse.* Æsthetics of Diderot. MATERIALISM.

1748–1774.

IT is time to return to the history of ideas, which, during almost all this century, unfolds side by side with the history of events, the one increasing in importance in proportion as the other diminishes. On passing from political intrigues and material strife to intellectual strife, from the generals and favorites of Louis XV. to the writers and the philosophers, we seem passing from pygmies to Titans. Here even the errors are excesses of energy and daring: they attest the vigor of the minds led astray by their very vitality.

During the first period of the eighteenth century, a single man has almost unceasingly occupied the stage,— a kind of Briareus of philosophy, aiming at every thing, meditating on every thing, striking everywhere, as if he had a hundred heads and hands. This will not be the case henceforth. Voltaire will lose nothing of his activity or his genius; he will even grow in authority among the nations; but his authority will no longer be unique and undisputed in the army of innovators: his boldness will be surpassed both in good and evil, and new heroes will rush unshielded, with more passionate impetuosity, into that arena, constantly fuller and more tumultuous, where Montesquieu, hitherto his sole

Digitized by Google

rival, has appeared only at rare intervals with measured steps and well covered with defensive armor.

The career of Voltaire was clearly divided into two parts by his departure for Berlin in 1750. We need not recount this sojourn in Prussia, which he has traced himself with his inimitable pen; and we shall not undertake to sketch the history of that wholly French Academy of Berlin, which exercised such notable influence over the spirit of Northern Germany: this subject has been treated in a recent work with all the elaborateness desirable.[1] The important point to be noted here is, that it was there that Atheism exhibited itself systematically and unveiled before daring to do so in France, and there also that Voltaire, who had as yet opposed, more or less openly, only positive religion and Cartesian spiritualism, had a first conflict with Atheism, and played the part of defender, after having always been the assailant; thus marking the fixed point where he would have gladly arrested the progress of destruction. In his cynical works, La Mettrie, Frederick's physician, combining the mechanical physics of Descartes, separated from his metaphysics, with sensualism, denied all morality, all conscience, and all distinction between good and evil, and made the world an eternal aggregate of movements without a motive power, and man a sensitive machine. Voltaire replied by the poem, *The Natural Law*, an eloquent manifesto of Deism and of Universal Morality.[2] Frederick, the judge of the field, left full liberty to the combatants; and all opinions, Catholicism excepted, had a place in his academy. Protestant Christianity was gloriously represented therein by the philosopher geometrician, Euler, whom France can claim to a certain degree, since he wrote part of his works in French, like Leibnitz, especially his *Letters to a German Princess*. The master's taste, nevertheless, caused the sceptical and mocking philosophy to predominate, which was not displeasing to the most illustrious of his guests.

Voltaire passed a few months of real enchantment in this society sparkling with wit and sarcastic gayety. Divided between labor and pleasure, — the pleasure of the mind, which had always been the first, and which was now the only one to him, — he had never so fully lived. Far from forgetting the mother-country in this little philosophic France, whose royalty he shared with Fred-

[1] *Histoire de l'Académie des sciences de Berlin*, by M. Bartholmess, crowned by the French Academy.

[2] Written in 1751, published in 1756, and condemned by the parliament, although the Christian dogmas were not attacked in it: the Jansenist sect was, however.

Digitized by Google

erick, he became more patriotic at a distance, and finished his national work, *The Age of Louis XIV.*, at the same time with *The Essay on the Manners of Nations*. Fire flashed in a continuous jet from his pen as from his lips.

The prestige was of short duration. It is the heart, and not the mind, that makes lasting bonds. The charm that Frederick knew how to give to his intercourse could not long conceal the coldness of his soul: could he have exhausted in one evening the wit of his friends, he would have thrown them away the next day like a squeezed orange, — an incomprehensible man, born to inspire astonishment, and not affection; admirable in conversation and familiar correspondence; mediocre with the pen in hand, when the German monarch, become a French author, struggled with the difficulties of a foreign language;[1] compelling the respect of Europe by his martial prodigies and his administrative wisdom; and rendering himself the laughing-stock of courts by the eccentricities of bad poetry, and by an ignoble and revolting vice.

The tyrannical selfishness of Frederick, the susceptibility and irascibleness of Voltaire, and the jealous intrigues of Maupertuis, the President of the Academy, who was overshadowed by the proximity of this powerful name, soon brought about coolness, unfriendly behavior, and dissensions, followed by hollow reconciliations. The scandalous rupture in which this so much vaunted friendship ended — the presage of the destined issue of all alliances between absolutism and philosophy — is familiar to all (1753). Every one knows the story of Voltaire's captivity at Frankfort, in the hands of the recruiting agents of the King of Prussia, — *Alexander* transformed into *Dionysius of Syracuse*. Frederick was ashamed of it, however. He employed grace and address in repairing his errors; and the philosopher and the king became reconciled afterwards, but at a distance: they could not refrain from liking each other; but Voltaire pardoned only by halves, as was proved by his terrible secret Memoirs.

Escaped from the Prussian claws, Voltaire was unwilling to return to Paris, where the antipathy, or rather the fear, of the King, permitted him no security. He wandered about for some time in Lorraine and Alsace. Harassed by the clergy, he repaired to Geneva by the way of Lyons: the popular ovation which he received in the latter city manifested to him the progress that his

[1] His political and military Memoirs, our principal authority with respect to the wars of these times, are infinitely superior to his purely literary works; but he is far in these from Cæsar and Napoleon.

Digitized by Google

name and ideas had made in France. He chose the place of his final settlement with great adroitness. He purchased two houses near Geneva and Lausanne; then a third in the territory of Gex, the château of Ferney, which became his habitual residence some years after, when political disturbances had disgusted him with the city of Calvin. He thus had a footing at once in France, in Berne, and in Geneva; and secured himself time, in case of a storm, to shelter his person from danger, and, in ordinary times, facilities for supervising the publication of his works, whether acknowledged or anonymous, to which the interest of commerce, as well as the taste for letters, guaranteed the tolerance of the Genevese magistrates. Descartes had formerly sought an obscure retreat in order to think: Voltaire made himself a brilliant solitude in order to act. Les Délices and Ferney were to him a little kingdom, so to speak. All Europe viewed him from afar, seated, like the God of tempests, between the Alps and the Jura; and philosophy had its place of pilgrimage, whither the adepts of the new ideas were to journey, for twenty years and more, to salute their patriarch, and whither even crowned heads were to throng.

Voltaire had worthily inaugurated his accession by his beautiful *Epistle to Liberty* (1755): the Alps and the heroic traditions of the republican Helvetia had well inspired him: nevertheless, this period was the most painful of his moral life. The disenchantment with respect to Frederick had left his soul filled with bitterness: the scourges which, at that very moment, Nature and kings were vying with each other in letting loose on humanity, disordered his imagination, and saddened his heart. An earthquake which shook the West from Sahara to the North Sea had just destroyed the principal towns of Morocco, and overthrown Lisbon upon thousands of corpses (November, 1755); and the Seven-years' War was begun by the gigantic piracies of those Englishmen whom Voltaire had celebrated as a nation of sages, and continued by the mad French invasion which Madame de Pompadour precipitated upon Germany. Surrounded with so many misfortunes, crimes, and follies, the disciple of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke lost his belief in that theory of optimism which had long been the connecting link of his thoughts, and to which the course of life had already dealt so many blows. Thence proceeded the poem on the *Disaster of Lisbon*, and the novel *Candide*, the same thought expressed under two such opposite forms: here a hymn of suffering, abrupt, heart-rending, pathetic to sublimity, rising to God as the plaint of unhappy humanity; there

Digitized by Google

a long and acrid satire, in which the *all is good* of optimism becomes the text for inexhaustible raillery of facts; a bitter laughter, a sardonic gayety, which gnaws the heart like a serpent's tooth. *Candide* is, of all the works of Voltaire, the one that has been the worst judged: it has been ascribed to him as a crime equal to the unpardonable sin of the *Maid of Orleans*. There has been seen in it a cruel sport, an impious derision of the human race, the work of a satanic genius. The moral state of the writer at the epoch when the work was conceived has been wholly disregarded. This book is assuredly very painful to read; but the reader suffers only because the author has suffered. His soul, so mobile, and so well armed by its mobility against suffering, never perhaps experienced such anxieties as at the moment when it thus burst forth into convulsive laughter.

Candide is, to speak truly, a renunciation of all system. Voltaire abandons all explanation of man and the universe, and remains clinging in empty space to a vague and obscure Deism, without final causes, without enthusiasm, and without consolation.

He no longer had a system: others were about to make a system after him, beyond him, in spite of him; they were about to deduce fatalism and pure materialism from his inconsistent sensualism, and Atheism or universal scepticism from his Deism devoid of basis and authority. Thinkers more eloquent and more authoritative, hearts more upright, than La Mettrie, were about to follow to the end the old path of Epicures and Lucretius, the highway to annihilation.

They did not straightway proceed thither. The progress was varied, complicated, and embarrassed with singular contradictions. We must thread this labyrinth, each winding of which offers a lesson and points out a quicksand to posterity. At the very beginning appeared the most brilliant of the contradictions that we denounce. A new system of metaphysics was formulated for the use of the sensualists and the fatalists by a philosopher who was neither the one nor the other, and who, spiritualistic and almost idealistic, lent to materialism, without desiring it, its most formidable weapon.

Voltaire had introduced Locke into France, and imbued all his works with the principles of Locke; but he had added nothing to these principles, and had not published his own *Treatise on Metaphysics*, which, moreover, has neither the method nor the rigor of a system. It is a characteristic fact, that the man who gave to the eighteenth century its metaphysical formula, however eminent

Digitized by Google

may have been his merit, too much depreciated in our days, was not one of the great geniuses of the epoch, one of those brilliant names which will live forever in the memory of multitudes. The reason was that the eighteenth century was a polemical and political, much more than a metaphysical age: its glory was in polemics and politics, and not in metaphysics.

The Abbé de Condillac,[1] a man of lucid mind, and a correct and pure writer, less practical, and mingling less with active life, but more of a dialectician, and especially more of a geometrician, than Locke, seemed destined, by the nature of his intellect, to attach himself to Cartesianism rather than to the doctrine imported from England. In the first chapter of his first work, the *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* (1746), he began, in fact, by refuting the doubt of Locke, repeated to satiety by Voltaire, "Can the body think?" and demonstrated in a solid and luminous manner the unity, simplicity, and indivisibility of the soul or the thinking subject. He went farther, and seemed to draw the induction, not only that the soul exists, but that it is the only certain existence. "Whether we mount to the skies or descend to the lowest depths, we do not go out of ourselves, and we never perceive any thing but our own thought." "The modifications of the soul," he says elsewhere, "become the qualities of every thing that exists outside of it."

What was to be expected from this starting-point if not a development, or, at most, a reformation of rationalism, an effort to revive the French metaphysical school? If danger existed, there was reason to believe that it was on the side of idealistic scepticism, of that theory which refuses certainty to the external world, insufficiently demonstrated by pure reason.

Strange infirmity of the human mind! This same philosopher was about to carry the system of sensation farther than Locke; to construct it, at least in appearance, with a rigor which the latter had not possessed; and to sweep from this system all that still opposed obstacles to materialism.

To discard from metaphysics hypotheses and rash aspirations; to know how to confine one's self to the limits which nature has fixed for the human mind, — such was the end proposed by Condillac. "The first object," he says, "should be the study of the human mind, not to discover its inexplicable nature, but to know its operations. It is necessary to go back to the origin of our

[1] Born at Grenoble in 1715.

Digitized by Google

ideas, to develop their generation, and to follow them to the bounds prescribed by nature, in order to fix the extent of our knowledge, and to regenerate the human understanding by limiting it to its true objects."

From the first step, it is objected, are we not already beyond observation and analysis, which would begin, on their side, by verifying the nature of our ideas before seeking their origin in the cradle of our obscure infancy? To go back by an *à priori* to this origin, which cannot be directly observed, — is not this precisely beginning by an hypothesis?

"My design," he continues, "is to refer to a single principle all that concerns the human understanding." Here, there is no doubt, we are really in the domain of the *à priori* and the hypothesis!

This principle is that all our ideas, and all our knowledge, come from the senses; that perception or sensation is the first operation of the soul, and the one which, by transforming itself, successively becomes all the others. Consciousness, attention, and reminiscence are only the three degrees of transformed sensation, which then experience new transformations. Locke is thus exceeded. He had reserved, by the side of the passive principle of sensation, the active principle of reflection: here sensation is every thing. Condillac, notwithstanding, believed that the soul possessed an activity of its own. A very explicit passage may be quoted from him concerning the power and the active character of reflection, a passage which appears irreconcilable with the formulas of his system: the reason of this is, that, to arrive at his single principle, he had confounded the active and the passive, sensation and reflection, and believed sensation itself active. But his disciples would not stop at this confusion of terms, but would carry the theory to its logical consequences, following common sense as to the passivity of sensation.

It was not worth while to write a treatise *On Systems* against systems (1749), and to attack so warmly, in the name of observation and experiment, the abstract principles and hypotheses of Plato or Descartes, of Malebranche or Leibnitz, only to end one's self in a system much less specious than those which were attacked. Descartes, at least, had established his first principle, and made hypotheses only in setting out from what was above hypothesis.

The theory of Condillac was completed in the *Treatise on Sen-*

Digitized by Google

sations (1754).[1] We shall not follow him through his famous metaphysical novel, *The Animated Statue*. A fatalistic and materialistic philosopher would not have arranged his plan differently: not only the innate ideas, but the essential faculties, of the mind appear to be denied here: the mind is nothing but a blank tablet; the soul is absolutely void until sensation comes to write on this tablet. This *statue*, this inert matter which he takes for a subject, and which does not offer the least relation to the real being, to the infant man, a nature active in its essence and from its origin, he awakens to life, we know not how, by a first sensation, the principle not only of all the ideas, but of the faculties themselves, which are nothing but acquired habits, and not preëxisting tendencies. The desire and the will are, like the ideas and the faculties, nothing but transformed sensations. Our ideas are all relative to our manner of feeling, and representatives of the objects of our sensations: there are, therefore, no absolute and general ideas. The *Ego* of the *Statue*, its personality, is only the collection of the sensations which it experiences, and those of which it is reminded by memory. The moral ideas themselves are not independent of the senses: the morality of actions consists only in their conformity with laws. Now, these actions are visible, and the laws likewise, since the laws are agreements made by men, — agreements, it is true, which should not be arbitrary, but dictated by nature according to our necessities and faculties. All this is very unmetaphysical, if metaphysics is the science of principles and causes: laws are differently defined by Montesquieu!

We are not ignorant that Condillac always implies the being one and simple, the substance under the phenomena; but, after him, this reservation would be abolished; and besides, this being, if it existed, would exist without liberty. It was in vain that Condillac struggled against this consequence; it was in vain that he wrote a treatise on *Free Will*, and sought to prove the existence of God: sensation can give neither God nor liberty; it can arrive neither at the principle of causality nor at general ideas.

The French mind must have been absorbed by a strange preoccupation for such a system to have reigned almost undisputed over metaphysics for more than half a century.[2] It must have

[1] This treatise was prepared with the assistance of a woman, Mademoiselle Ferrand, who died before the publication of the common work.

[2] Until La Romiguère, who, while defending Condillac against the imputation of ma-

Digitized by Google

wandered far from the way of abstract truth, and been fully engrossed by the struggle with realities. During another and the last half century, the doctrine of sensation, expelled from philosophy, but taking refuge in the sciences, has left only too many traces in the ideas and habits of the present generation.

Whatever may have been the errors of Condillac, and their fatal consequences, he will keep his place in the sacred chair of philosophy. He had the merit of putting an end to a confusion between the faculties and the ideas which had misled his most illustrious predecessors. He sought to analyze the faculties of the soul, and to discern their connection and order; and, although he was unsuccessful, credit should be given him for the example and effort. He rendered a still greater service. On disengaging his real thought from his erroneous formulas, it will be recognized that no one since Descartes has lent a more effective support to the doctrine of the unity of the human being. Descartes had said that the whole peculiarity of the soul is only that of thinking. Unless a forced interpretation is given to the word "thought," this excessive and incomplete definition leaves a certain advantage, either to the materialistic critic or to the old scholastic opinions concerning the two souls, — the reasoning and the *sensitive*. Condillac, in defining the soul as a substance that feels, a substance capable of sensation, completed Descartes.[1] He explicitly asserted what Descartes believed at heart, that the soul alone feels by reason of the organs; that every thing is in the soul; and openly applied this principle to all the animated beings that Descartes had banished to the mechanical world. *I feel, therefore I am, therefore I have a soul* (or rather *I am a soul*), is not less true than *I think, therefore I am:* only it cannot be made the basis of a method, since to philosophize it is not enough to be a passivity that

terialism, overthrew his theory by substituting for sensation the active and voluntary principle of attention as the starting-point of a whole system of the faculties and operations of the soul. With him commenced the revival of metaphysics in France. It has been too often forgotten that La Romiguère preceded Royer Collard, and that the philosophic renaissance dates in France from 1811, and not from the Restoration. There were in the eighteenth century intermediate links between Condillac and La Romiguère. For instance, Euler, in the metaphysical considerations contained in the *Lettres à une princesse d'Allemagne*, very correctly separates attention from sensation; but he becomes troubled after the first step, and does not arrive at a true system of the faculties of the soul. The naturalistic philosopher of Geneva, Charles Bonnet, in his *Essai analytique sur les facultés de l'âme* (1760), again falls behind Euler, and nearer Condillac.

[1] And Leibnitz. Descartes says the soul is a thought; Leibnitz says the soul is a force, an activity; Condillac says the soul is a *sensibility*.

Digitized by Google

feels; it is necessary to be an activity that thinks. It is here that Condillac was fundamentally mistaken.[1]

Condillac, a man of grave manners and circumspect mind, did not go perhaps, on his own part, so far as Deism, or put himself in hostility with the religion whose livery he wore. He was very far from admitting the moral consequences that might logically be deduced from sensualistic metaphysics; and his own conclusions, as we have just seen, were thus deduced only through misunderstanding. Another was to draw these consequences without reservation and without scruple.

This other was Helvetius,[2] a wit and a man of pleasure, of an excellent natural disposition, but much better fitted to play the part in the world of a rich philanthropist — partly a man of letters, and partly a Mæcenas — than to launch into the lofty speculations of abstract thought.

A farmer-general, he had presented the wholly new spectacle of a defender of the poor in those functions which usually showed to the taxpayers nothing but tyrants. Having retired from business with a large fortune, of which he made the most honorable use, he undertook a theoretical work, in which he summed up and set forth unmasked the opinions that were current around him in society.

The Mind appeared in 1758. The title is imperfectly justified.

[1] We must not quit Condillac without calling to mind two works full of profound and bold views, *La Grammaire* and *La Langue des Calculs*, which would have sufficed to render his memory illustrious. An effort has been made to attribute to his theory concerning the formation of languages and the necessity of signs a materialistic character which it does not possess. He clearly saw, like Rousseau, that signs and sounds are by no means arbitrary; that the first were natural, and that those which came afterwards were invented according to analogy. He perceived, that, as wants precede knowledge, knowledge precedes words; since we make words simply to express ideas which we already possess: only, the words, the *artificial* (not *arbitrary*) signs, are necessary to furnish us the means of analyzing the thoughts which present themselves simultaneously in our mind, to decompose the operations of the soul, and to give us distinct ideas of these operations, as well as of external objects.

In short, his theory is that man *thinks*, but does not *reason*, without the aid of language; that simple ideas, which we have in common with the animals, precede language; that general ideas, to which the animals cannot attain for want of the faculty which discovers signs, are manifested only by the aid of language.

We will not discuss, but must mention, his famous axiom, that all science is only a succession of identical propositions; *that we go from the same to the same;* that a science of reasoning consists, not in a progress of ideas, but in a progress of expressions; that is, that every thing is contained in the first idea, which it is only in question to develop. His extensive *Cours d'Études*, composed for the education of the heir of Parma, presents everywhere at once precepts and examples of the analytical method in which he excels.

[2] Born in 1715, and the son of the celebrated physician of that name.

Digitized by Google

The analysis of the human mind is only the introduction, and not the subject of the work. The end of Helvetius is to determine what is the motive power of human actions and judgments; in other terms, what is the principle of morality. He begins by repeating Condillac, while carrying him to extremes. He advances the theory that the cause of our superiority over animals is found in the difference of our physical organization, and especially in the shape of our hands. Condillac could not have disavowed this; for he had said, that, if animals have not the same faculties as ourselves, it is because the organ of touch is less perfect among them: but what Condillac would never have granted, and what nevertheless is logically deduced from the system of sensation, is, that moral liberty is a chimera. "Our wishes," says Helvetius, "being the immediate effects or the necessary results of the impressions that we have received, a philosophical treatise on liberty would be only a treatise on effects without a cause."

It is needless to say that Helvetius supports Locke and Voltaire in opposition to Condillac, on the question, *Can the body think?* He goes farther. The word matter no longer signifies only the collection of properties common to all bodies; that is, apparently, matter, as well as mind, are merely words; there is no substance; there are only qualities without an object. The property of feeling is, in his opinion, common to all bodies, even inorganic.

From this metaphysics he hastens to pass to ethics.

Man, being only a *sensible* being (he means *sensitive*), can naturally have but one end, — the pleasure of the senses. Every thing ends in this, directly or indirectly. Goodness is that which contributes to our pleasures; evil, that which is injurious to our interests. Interest is the true measure of our judgments, and the principle of our actions. Probity is the habit of doing deeds useful to society. Virtue is what is in conformity with the public interest; vice, what is contrary to it. Actions are indifferent in themselves; that is to say, there is neither vice nor virtue in reference to ourselves, — to our *inner being;* neither vice nor virtue in itself. Those kinds of virtues relative to ourselves are virtues of prejudice (modesty, for instance). What is vice in a religious point of view is unimportant to the public good. The vicious man is to be pitied for having those tastes and passions which *force* him to seek his happiness in the misfortunes of others; for, in fine, men always obey their interest: the moral universe is subjected to the laws of interest, as the physical universe to

Digitized by Google

the laws of motion. It is as impossible to love goodness for itself as to love evil for itself.

The humane man is he to whom the sight of the unhappiness of others is insupportable, and who, to save himself from this spectacle, is, as it were, *forced* to succor the unfortunate. The inhuman man is he to whom the sight of the misery of others is a pleasant spectacle. The highest virtue, as the most shameful vice, in us, is the effect of the more or less lively pleasure that we feel in abandoning ourselves to it. Nature is nothing but habit. Almost the only two motive powers of communities are hunger among savages, and (physical) love among civilized men. A multitude of peoples live or have lived in society without the idea of God.[1]

How, then, succeed in improving society? By teaching individuals to find their advantage in the public happiness. Education is every thing. The mind being a *blank tablet* in the infant man, intellects are naturally equal. The difference of education alone makes their inequality. Chance alone develops genius in certain men.

We see by what a concatenation of ideas Helvetius arrives, in the moral order, at the point of dispensing with God; in the political order, at that of tacitly deducing an equality which is not the equality of rights (there are no longer either rights or duties here), but a pretended identity of fact among men. He arrives at a materialistic democracy by the same road which led Hobbes, more logical and more profound, to an Atheistic despotism. Hobbes rightly saw that absolute power is alone capable of maintaining any material order whatsoever in a community without an ideal and without law. The lion is needed to command the wolves.

It is important to point out here the first germ of the false democracy which was to be, for a time that we cannot yet measure, the chief obstacle to the institution of the new city. Geniuses far superior to Helvetius were to err with him in this path. We shall revert to it hereafter. As to his theory of selfishness or interest, we will content ourselves with a few words in passing. It is quite certain that man can set out only from himself, and that there is always some relation to himself in his sentiments; it would be puerile to discuss this point: but, if we call selfishness or interest every sentiment which interests us in any manner whatever, we do violence to language; if we pretend that every

[1] He knew history as well as human nature, which is saying every thing.

Digitized by Google

sentiment which interests us has only ourselves for its end, we do violence to common sense. Selfishness, in the language of the whole world, is that which shuts us up within ourselves, which considers others only as the material for our enjoyment: all that causes us to love outside of ourselves; all that leads us towards others or towards general ideas, which are all summed up mediately or immediately in God; all affection directed towards other beings or towards the Creator; all individual, collective, or divine love, — is the opposite of selfishness; and to deny the reality of these affections, — to deny, for instance, that goodness can be loved for its own sake, — is to be profoundly ignorant of human nature, and of the nature of existence in general.

The distinctive characteristic of Helvetius is that audacity of vulgar logic which reveals, not the extent, but, on the contrary, the bounds, of a limited and perverted mind: the complex and mysterious relations of things escape him; he denies what he does not see, and is never restrained by common sense, which he takes for prejudice.[1]

This mediocre book had an effect which greatly exceeded its proper value: must we think that contemporary society, which had sat for the portrait before the author, recognized its own image? "This man has told everybody's secret." This terrible saying of a female wit,[2] which condemned a whole generation, was true only with great restrictions. A furious tempest broke forth in official regions. The book had appeared, under the author's name, with the license of the King, a complaisant censor having approved without attempting to comprehend it. The Sorbonne and the Archbishop of Paris thundered against it: the Court despoiled Helvetius of an honorary post which he held in the Queen's household, and the parliament was about to issue a writ against him. He retracted in the most explicit, and, it must be admitted, the least worthy terms. His doctrine was not of those which make martyrs. No one took this retraction in earnest, and it was not calculated to arrest the movement of ideas to which Helvetius had served as an organ. Too many men were glad, without being willing to admit it, to see their practice reduced to theory.

How far could this theory lead? Helvetius, had he fully comprehended it, would have been even more appalled than Condillac

[1] See a good analysis of Helvetius in the *Cours d'histoire de la Philosophie moderne*, by M. Cousin, first series, t. III. l. iv. v.

[2] Madame de Boufflers.

Digitized by Google

must have been at seeing what Helvetius had made of the system of sensation. All vices and all crimes were tacitly justified. Helvetius, who was good by nature, did and counselled goodness because he found pleasure in doing so: a monster of madness, who had destroyed in himself all instinctive sympathies, would only have to apply the same principle in an inverse direction, to draw the ideal of crime from a book which seems written by Tiberius at Caprea, and to annihilate, after virtue, Nature herself. Nature, in fact, is only a word, like all else, according to *The Mind.*

It suffices to indicate these extremes of monstrous logic: it is unnecessary to dwell on sinister exceptions. The wholesale evil which attacked this society of lax and effeminate manners was not the energy of crime, the over-excitement of the senses turned to orgie-like and bloody delirium, as in the era of the Cæsars, but the sophistication of minds, the benumbing of hearts, the degradation of souls by the destruction of all ideal. Helvetius reduced to maxims, so to speak, the decline predicted by Leibnitz.[1]

Ideality having disappeared from the moral sciences, was all fire then extinct? Had all that warms the heart, all that elevates the mind, vanished? Was this age, so full, after all, of buoyancy and life, about to sink and stagnate, asphyxiated in the mire? It was impossible. The restless ardor of imaginations and intellects knew well how to create for themselves an aliment: the passion, indestructible at the bottom of the soul of France, might indeed have been repressed, but not stifled, by petty vices and petty sophisms. No: sensual selfishness was not yet *everybody's secret.* Enthusiasm, driven from the domain of the heart, from the world of minds, took refuge at first in the sciences of Nature, — in the great spectacle of that external world which was unveiling itself more and more to our gaze. We have seen with what sincere zeal and with what energy Voltaire had sung, commented on, and popularized Newton, and instigated the truly sublime verification of one of the Newtonian theories by our courageous French travellers: but Voltaire was in physics merely a brilliant popularizer; he was not the initiative genius which the philosophy of Nature was awaiting among us. He skimmed the surface of it with brilliancy, like every thing else; but he did nothing more than skim it: he was too truly the successor of that French literature so fully absorbed in the analysis of man, he was too much the representative of the social spirit, the type itself of re-

[1] See vol. I. p. 318.

Digitized by Google

fined civilization, to be the man of Nature. The sentiment of the mysterious harmonies of the universe, and of what may be called the religion of life, was lacking in his rational Deism: he never knew the patience and contemplation necessary to surprise the secrets of the eternal Isis.

Voltaire contributed to diffuse science without increasing it. The French scholars of the first half of the century caused the advancement of the different branches of human knowledge: but none of them had that synthetic view which embraces and regenerates a great science as a whole; none had the stamp of creative geniuses. We have already named a few of the eminent men who sustained the honor of the Academy of Sciences, the Mairans,[1] the Clairauts, the Fontaines, etc. Scientific France kept the high position that she had conquered. It was perhaps in mathematics that her preponderance was still decided. A man of superior mind had been revealed therein, — D'Alembert, destined later to an active though circumspect part in a sphere less peaceful than geometry. The natural son of the renowned Canoness Tencin; abandoned by his mother's orders on the steps of the Church Saint-Jean-le-Rond, and picked up and reared by a poor female glazier, whom he always acknowledged as his true mother, when, later, Madame du Tencin wished in vain to claim a son who had become illustrious, — he emerged at a very early age from obscurity by precocious talent employed by an independent character and an able mind. In 1743, at twenty-six, his treatise on *Dynamics* placed him at the summit of contemporaneous science: his principle of the *Equality of the Changes experienced by the Motion of Bodies, and the Forces employed to produce these Changes*, caused a true revolution in geometry applied to mechanics.[2] In 1746, he invented a new calculus, the *Integral Calculus of Partial Differences*, a powerful instrument of ulterior progress. In 1749, he resolved the problem of the *precession of the equinoxes;* then published *Researches on Different Important Points of the System of the World.* He attained the highest rank among the few men that have known how to wed literary elegance to sci-

[1] We are indebted to him, apart from his discoveries in the exact sciences, for having been the first to make known among us the true printed and written characters of the Chinese language, and for having paved the way, in more than one respect, for the great modern discoveries concerning Egyptian ideography. He was the popularizer in Europe of the works of Father Parennin, that Jesuit who played so important and so original a part in China, where he had been kept as a mathematician, after the persecution of 1722.

[2] Meanwhile, Vaucanson's ingenious inventions in practical mechanics familiarized the public with the progress of sciences.

Digitized by Google

entific solidity; but this clear, firm, and methodical mind, which had only light without heat, and reason without imagination, was unsuited to the sciences of life, like Voltaire, but through other causes.

D'Alembert shone in mathematics applied to the theory of the physical sciences, astronomy, mechanics, and general physics. The practical mathematics, at least geography and geodesy, alike preserved their superiority in France. Danville, the continuer of Delisle, reconstructed ancient geography, and rendered inappreciable services to history. Jacques Cassini erected a perpendicular to the meridian, begun by his father, and finished by him: France was thus measured from Collioure to Dunkirk, and from St. Malo to Strasburg. The third Cassini (César-François) corrected the works of his father and grandfather, and undertook, with Camus and Montigni, a great map of France in 1751.[1]

In astronomical observations, foreigners rivalled France: there was a noble emulation. The scientific voyages were continued. Twice, in 1761 and 1769, at first among the perils of war, then after the peace of Paris, the French astronomers journeyed to the remotest parts of the world, to the seas of India and China, to Siberia and to California, to observe the two successive transits of Venus across the sun's disk. The distance of the sun from the earth was thenceforth known within three hundred thousand leagues,—that is, within about one-hundredth; while before there had been an uncertainty of from eight to ten million leagues. The names of La Gentil, the Canon of St. Genevieve, Pingré, and the Abbé Chappe, deserve a place by the side of those of the Bouguers, La Condamines, and Clairauts. The Abbé Chappe died a martyr to science in those very regions where so many bold adventurers were one day to wrest gold from the bowels of the earth at the price of less noble sufferings.[2] Another learned traveller, the Abbé de La Caille, gave the easiest method of calculating longitude at sea from the observation of the moon (1755). The *Nautical Almanac* was commenced according to his plan, but was not

[1] The first organization of civil engineering dates from this epoch. Cassini formed a corps of engineers to execute his map. He died in 1784; and the work was finished in 1790 by his son, Jacques Dominique. There have been few examples of such hereditary transmission of special talents.

[2] To the same period belongs another celebrated voyage, the first voyage around the world made by a French vessel, — that of Bougainville (1764–1766). The English and the Dutch had already made fifteen of these expeditions. The discovery of Tahiti, and the observations on the manners and customs of its inhabitants, at an epoch when men were so much preoccupied with the *state of nature* and every thing relating to it, gave the narrative of Bougainville great popularity.

Digitized by Google

finished; and the English robbed us of the honor of its completion (1767). Lalande, the pupil of La Caille, organized astronomy, so to speak, by grouping the adepts of this beautiful science: he wrote his great *Treatise on Astronomy* (1764), and took for fifteen years the principal part in the publication of the *Knowledge of the Times* (1760–1775). Messier published, in 1771, the catalogue of the *Nebulæ*.

History also owes remembrance to the skilful artists who improved the instruments of science, new organs which centuple the power of the organs given us by Nature: as, for instance, Lepaute, who caused clockmaking to make such great progress, while his wife, the assistant of Clairaut and Lalande, participated in the progress of astronomy.; and Leroi and Bertaud, the inventors of the chronometers experimented upon under all latitudes by Father Pingré.

In some other branches of human knowledge, France did not make so important a figure. Chemistry, that new science which was freeing itself more and more from the old alchemic visions, presented labors worthy of esteem among us; but the essential discoveries concerning the gases and the true elements of bodies belonged to foreign countries. The theory of chemistry, nevertheless, still remained to be constructed, and France was ere long to take a glorious revenge. From the learned lectures given by Rouelle[1] at the Jardin des Plantes, was about to proceed that Lavoisier, destined to systematize the science which introduces man into the mysterious laboratory of Nature, and reveals to him no longer only the properties, but the composition and decomposition, of inorganic bodies.

Neither was it to France that the glory reverted of the brilliant discoveries wrought in the most obscure, and hitherto most intangible part of physics, — electricity. Yet, before Franklin, a Frenchman, Duhamel-Dumonceau, a universal scholar, had affirmed the identity of the electric fluid with lightning.[2] Franklin developed this idea, constructed its theory, then proved it by courageous experiments, which were executed simultaneously in France by Dalibard and Lemonnier (1752).

We at length arrive at natural history proper, and its highest branch, the science of animated nature. During the first half of

[1] To him belongs the classification of the salts.

[2] Among innumerable works on botany, agronomy, physics, and chemistry, we are indebted to him for the first theory of fertilizers. — Concerning his claims, see Hoëffer. *Hist. de la Chimie*, t. II. p. 396.

Digitized by Google

the century, a sagacious, practical, active, and ingenious mind had inspired a lively interest in some parts of zoölogy. This was Réaumur, who signalized himself by so happily applying physics and natural history to the arts and manufactures, and, reciprocally, the observations gathered in manufacturing processes, to scientific studies. He taught the art of converting iron into steel (1722), and the art of manufacturing tin (1725); and commenced the experiments with respect to porcelain (1727–1739), which were afterwards pursued with full success by the chemists Darcet and Macquer, and which ended in the beautiful invention of the Sèvres porcelain; he invented a new thermometer by the application of an idea of Newton (1731);[1] he recognized, after Palissi, the mysterious interest presented to science by the vast banks of fossil shells, called *falun* in Touraine, and which have since been discovered at so many other points (1720); lastly, after a host of papers on natural history, he published, from 1734 to 1742, his celebrated *Papers for the Service of the History of Insects*, — a true master-piece, unfortunately incomplete. No one has rendered science more attractive. Nothing can be finer or more delicate than the art with which he penetrates into this new and varied world of minute creatures. We feel in him the life, and no longer only the mathematics, of Nature: he was one of the precursors of the brilliant genius that was about to dawn on the natural sciences.

The discoveries multiplied: great facts, important though still isolated laws, were recognized, both in geography and in the zoölogical path opened by Réaumur: for instance, one of the most original and most elevated minds of the age, the Genevese, Charles Bonnet, while still young, perceived that certain insects propagate without coupling (1740), and confirmed by his experiments the yet more astonishing discovery of Trembley concerning the polypi, and concerning several species of worms which are reproduced indefinitely by incision, after the manner of those vegetables which are multiplied by cuttings. These singular beings appear, as is proved by the great botanist Bernard de Jussieu, to connect the two kingdoms of animal life and vegetation; while inorganic nature itself seems linked to living nature by the animal existence verified by Peyssonel in the corals, madrepores, and other motionless inhabitants of the seas.

A lively attention was directed to our earth and the beings that

[1] The construction of this instrument, alone employed in France for a century, rests on the choice of the two extreme points of graduation; namely, the freezing and the boiling of water. A nominal change alone is effected in the number of degrees.

Digitized by Google

inhabit it, and to the origin and unknown phases of this earth and these beings. This curiosity redoubled in proportion as a bolder glance was plunged, beyond our atmosphere, into the depths of the sidereal world. When man extends his gaze so far, it becomes necessary, with still greater reason, that he should know his habitation, the races that share it with him, and his own race. It was evident that some great intellect was destined to manifest itself in this direction, that would synthetically connect all these facts and ideas, and fascinate the imagination by converging all these scattered rays into a sun. Nature alone could take the place of an ideal, in some sort, and restore poetry to the restless souls that materialism had banished from the higher worlds.

By the side of these discoveries, and super-excited by them, the hypotheses so much reviled by Voltaire and the experimental school still existed in the natural sciences, and maintained therein a salutary fermentation. A book, a medley of reveries, suppositions without foundation, and profound views, the *Telliamed*, or *Conversations of an Indian Philosopher and a French Missionary*,[1] had just excited much astonishment and a kind of scandal. The author advanced the theory therein, that the mountains were formed by the currents of the sea, as was proved by the deposits of marine substances and shells scattered through the interior of the earth; and that all living beings, man included, sprung from the sea. Voltaire greatly ridiculed the *fish-man*, and the mountains formed of shells; but the *Neptunian* system did not appear so ridiculous to every one.

All these attempts were preludes to great things which were about to appear.

On an eminence overlooked by a long range of hills of rugged aspect, amidst a landscape somewhat contemplative and solitary, although in the vicinity of the little Burgundian town of Montbard, an old tower rises in the midst of a wood of evergreens. It was in this domain, a few leagues from the country of Bossuet, that the child was born, September 7, 1707, that was destined to be the rival in eloquence of the author of the *Discourse on Universal History*, the Bossuet of naturalism. Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, the son of a parliamentary counsellor of Dijon, showed himself resolved, from his earliest youth, to devote to the sciences the liberty and means of action insured to him by a large fortune. He manifested at first, however, no special vocation, and exer-

[1] The posthumous work of an ex-consul of France in Egypt, by the name of Maillet, who had disguised his name under the anagram of Telliamed. He died in 1738.

Digitized by Google

cised his mind largely in different branches of human knowledge, in which zoölogy did not figure. He travelled over a part of France and Italy, and visited the Alps with two English friends, whom he then accompanied to their own country. These were the only travels of this man, who was unceasingly to journey over the whole earth in thought. He began his career, after his stay in England, by translating Hales's *Vegetable Statics*, and Newton's treatise on *Fluxions*. As if to pay his tribute to the spirit of the times, he attacked the hypotheses in his preface. Various papers on geometry, physics, and rural and forest economy, made him known on his return from England. Something colossal was already remarked in his imagination and processes. He made his experiments on an enormous scale, and attempted to reconstruct the mirror with which Archimedes stole fire from heaven to burn the enemy's fleets. The Academy of Sciences had summoned him to its midst at the age of twenty-six: the most sagacious among the scholars had a presentiment of his future. In 1739, the intendant of the Royal Jardin des Plantes, Dufay, an estimable physicist and naturalist, felt himself wasting away, while still young, with a languishing disease. The Jardin des Plantes had been, till his time, little more than a branch of the Faculty of Medicine. He had begun to enlarge its collections and instruction, and comprehended that something greater might be undertaken therein. He signed, with a dying hand, a request to the minister to give him Buffon as a successor. Buffon accepted this noble legacy, which decided his destiny, and furnished him the means of fixing and realizing the vast but still vague ideas which were revolving in his brain. He resolved to make the Jardin des Plantes the temple of Nature, and to become its high priest and historian.

Natural history thenceforth became the sole end of his brilliant faculties. Endowed with an extraordinary strength of will, for nearly sixty years he devoted the same number of hours every day to labor. Neither the pleasures of youth nor the infirmities of old age ever encroached upon his study. In his youth he caused himself to be dragged out of bed by violence at five in the morning, after returning at two from suppers in Paris. Of a powerful but incomplete organization, he was strengthened by what he lacked as much as by what he possessed. His serenity and equableness reposed less on the harmony of the essential elements of the man than on the atrophy of the element which gives birth to tempests, — the absence of the passions of

Digitized by Google

the heart. Every thing was sacrificed to the intellect. The physical life was not repressed in him, as in ascetic thinkers; it was, on the contrary, carelessly abandoned to instinct; while all the moral life was concentrated in science, — loved at once for itself, and as the instrument of glory. Glory was his only passion. Neither the love of women nor the hatred of social abuses excited or troubled his soul. The love of humanity, instead of the militant form of the times, took the scientific form in him. He loved humanity by enlightening it, by enlarging its horizon. He did not take as his motto, like another more devoted and more unfortunate great man, *Vitam impendere vero;*[1] while serving the truth, or what he believed to be such, he veiled it at times: he was always circumspect; he sacrificed much to obtain permission to pursue his work in peace. The magnificence of this work is his excuse before posterity.

What prodigious visions must have assailed him when Nature presented herself to him as a single being, whose forms he was to describe, and whose vicissitudes he was to recount; when the plan of a general history of the earth, and of life upon the earth, flashed upon his brain! Conception soars on eagle's wings: execution drags itself along at a snail's pace, even with the strongest and the most active. A whole existence does not suffice to realize the thought of a moment; and Buffon was destined, to use the expression of the great historian of the literature of the eighteenth century,[2] to journey over but a few radii of the great circle that he had traced. He lacked the preparatory studies: he strove to supply the deficiency by the power of labor and meditation.[3] He saw before him a beacon that would guide him over the obscure ocean of beings, — what was afterwards termed the theory of *necessary facts*, a true torch indeed to that physical world in which every thing is submissive to laws rigorously linked together. The idea was sublime, but rashly audacious. What human eye would not be troubled by the concatenation of *necessary facts?* Descartes had been lost therein! . . . It is not by such rashness that the human mind advances.

Physical organs were lacking in Buffon, as well as special studies. His near-sightedness unfitted him for observation. He completed himself by associating with him his fellow-countryman, Daubenton, a skilful and indefatigable experimenter, who was the

[1] *The mind,* he says, *is the best crucible.*
[2] M. Villemain.
[3] To sacrifice life to truth: the motto of Rousseau.

Digitized by Google

eye and hand where Buffon was the thought.[1] Buffon treated the general points of geology alone, shared the zoölogical studies with Daubenton, and merely touched theoretically upon botany; abandoning this science to the two brothers Jussieu, Antoine, and Bernard, well worthy, by their extended and generalizing minds, to walk by the side of Buffon in the path of natural philosophy.[2] The *Cabinet of Natural History* was created by their united efforts.[3]

After ten years' incubation, the thought of Buffon burst forth. The first three volumes of the *Natural History* appeared in 1749. The public stood thrilled with astonishment before the majesty of the subject and the language. Instead of the curt phraseology, the flashing strokes, of Montesquieu, instead of the winged speech of Voltaire, there was again found the ample phraseology of the ancients,—the full and harmonious periods, joined to the French clearness. It was the language of exposition and affirmation, instead of that of discussion and combat; it was the ideas of the modern times expressed with the solemn accent of the seventeenth century and of Roman antiquity. If there is no human genius that equals the majesty of Nature, as Buffon says with excusable hyperbole, it may be said, at least, that never have the marvels of the universe been celebrated in a language more worthy of them.

A great number of wits through frivolity, and a part of the scholars through other motives, saw little at first in Buffon but the great *colorist*, the *style*. Buffon himself aided in this by his maxim, *The style is the man;* but it is necessary to know how to interpret this. "The style is only the order and spirit which one employs in his thoughts;" that is, the whole work, except the inspiration and the general plan. "The style should engrave ideas, and not words. . . . Ideas alone form the foundation of style: the harmony of words is only accessory. . . . A fine style is such only through the infinite number of truths that it presents."[4]

The masses, on their side, abandoned themselves to the impres-

[1] Daubenton was something more: he "was the first to comprehend the general principle, the common link between all the facts which were to serve as a basis to comparative anatomy. He took man as the term of relation, and the animals as the terms of comparison."—Serres, *Organogénie*, ap. *Encyclop. nouvelle*, t. VII. p. 14.

[2] The Jussieu family was to be in botany what the Cassini family was in astronomy and geodesy. A third brother, Joseph, had shared, as botanist, the fatigues and perils of the expedition of La Condamine, Bouguer, and Godin, to Peru.

[3] It had been at first only a simple collection of medicinal plants. Dufay had begun by adding minerals: Buffon outlined the zoölogical galleries, which attained their magnificent growth only with Étienne Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire.

[4] *Discours de réception à l'Académie française*, 1753.

Digitized by Google

sion of force and grandeur which they received, without analyzing it over-much; but the men capable of comprehending what Buffon calls the *foundation of style*, that is, the conceptions clothed in this magnificent dress, were penetrated with a conscientious and profound admiration. Their sentiment enlightened and conquered that of the masses in proportion as the colossal work of Buffon extended with his glory, during nearly forty years. Nevertheless, Buffon was not to be completely and finally appreciated till our day.

From the beginning, he ascended alone straight to the summit which attracted him, while pointing out the danger of the beaten paths. He saw the sciences already involved in that obscure labyrinth of detailed facts in which they threatened to become scattered by breaking the bond that united them. "The metaphysics of the sciences," he says, "is neglected more perhaps than in any other age: men lose themselves in the methods of calculation and geometry, in formulas and nomenclatures." And he warmly attacks classifications, as arbitrary divisions of what is connected together in Nature by infinitely multiplied transitions. "There are neither genuses nor species in Nature; there are only individuals."[1] It is an error to believe that Nature works only on a single plan: the variety of her design and operations is infinite. It is an error to deduce one being from another, one kingdom from another.

One would say, from such words, that he perceived only the variety, and not the unity, of Nature; but this would be mistaking his true thought. This variety appeared to him as forming an order, a chain, a serie or series of almost insensible degrees, extending in every direction from the most perfect being to the most shapeless matter. It is the divisions of this chain that he denied: he saw it continued, and not subdivided.[2] In scholastic terms, he admitted of no other *universal* than Nature.

1 He soon arrived at quite an opposite opinion as to species.

2 See *Hist. Naturelle, premier Discours*; *de la Manière d'étudier et de traiter l'histoire naturelle*. It was in the *Contemplation de la Nature*, published from 1764 to 1765 by Charles Bonnet, one of the most eminent adepts of natural philosophy, that the chain of beings was presented under the aspect of a continuous scale in a single series. Buffon expressed no formal opinion in this respect; but what he says against the unity of the plan of Nature seems to set aside in advance the system of Bonnet, and to favor the theory formulated in our days by M. Isidore Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire on the *Parallel Series*.—See also the indications contained in the article *Choucas, Hist. des Oiseaux*. As to the idea of the unity of type, it is not implied in the negation of the unity of the plan of Nature. Buffon had not yet touched upon this idea.

Digitized by Google

Buffon was right on divers points in his criticisms of his contemporary and rival, the Swede Linnæus, the prince of classifiers, who in 1735 had drawn the outline, with a genius as profound as patient, of a general method of the two organic kingdoms of Nature. Nevertheless, the warfare waged by Buffon against methods was exaggerated, and opposed, in its farthest consequences, to the interests of science. If classifications have no absolute value, and cannot embrace all the natural relations of beings, they are not, however, arbitrary, since they embrace a part of these relations, and are the more valuable according as they embrace the more. They are the necessary conceptions of the human mind; and Buffon himself was obliged to make one, since he classed objects and beings according to the relation that they bear to man, and especially to the civilized European, — a method very unscientific, and which, moreover, he finally abandoned, in the course of his labors, to approach Linnæus, and to endeavor to improve by the hand of the master whom he had decried.[1]

If he disdained special methods too much at first, he laid down the general and transcendent method in terms worthy of Descartes. "The exact description and knowledge of particular facts is not the whole of natural history. It is necessary to rise from these to something greater; that is, to generalize facts, to connect them together by force of analogies, and to strive to arrive at the knowledge of the general effects, the causes of the particular facts, secondary causes to which the mind at least can rise, since the true causes are beyond its reach."

He immediately applied these principles: from the abstract region where he had hovered for a moment, he pounced like an eagle upon his subject, and took possession of our globe before touching the beings that people it. He summed up and arranged, in the *History and Theory of the Earth*, the labors and observations of the Réaumurs, the Bourguets, the Buaches, and so many other pioneers of geology since the aged Palissi, as he was to do, in

[1] See his admirable work on apes. The method of Linnæus, improved, has subsisted in zoölogy. In botany itself, Linnæus only paused provisionally at a classification founded on a single characteristic, that of sex, and sought the more general and natural method, which was pursued at the same time among us by Bernard de Jussieu, and which they both found. It was Jussieu that brought back from England, in his hat, the famous *cedar of Lebanon*, the parent of all the cedars which exist in France. The acclimation in France of many foreign vegetables is due to him. Another French botanist, Adanson, likewise attained the natural method, that which attaches itself to the most general and most comprehensive characteristics, in his *Familles des Plantes* (1763). He had conceived the gigantic plan of a complete natural encyclopædia.

Digitized by Google

the history of organized beings, with respect to the discoveries of the Peyssonels, the Duhamel-Dumonceaux, the Needhams, the Bonnets, the Trembleys, etc. He added his conclusions; and his *Theory of the Earth*, completed thirty years after by his immortal work, *The Epochs of Nature*, will forever remain the foundation of the science which reveals to man the annals of the ages prior to the human race, history before history, — history which is computed, not by centuries, but by unknown periods, which were written on the surface of the globe by the primitive fire, or the ocean, its successor.

The *History of the Earth* is indeed, as its author says, a *theory;* that is, a generalization of known facts, connected together by probable inductions, and not a *system;* that is to say, an arbitrary hypothesis invented *à priori*. Buffon does not even yet affirm therein the primitive incandescence of the globe: he explicitly affirms only the long continuance of the sea upon our continents, a continuance altogether foreign and prior to the biblical deluge, and attested by so many immense deposits of marine animals, the probable displacement of the bed of the sea in the ante-historic ages, the formation of the greater part of the terrestrial strata by the waters, and some other great phenomena proceeding from the same *Neptunian* cause. He presents separately, in the papers entitled *Proofs of the Theory of the Earth*, an hypothesis concerning the formation of the globe, upon which he by no means bases all his positive views concerning Nature. This hypothesis is that the earth and the other planets are merely fragments of the sun, detached from its body by collision with a comet. Science has demonstrated the impossibility of Buffon's idea. Another, happier hypothesis is common to Leibnitz and Buffon: namely, that our planet was at first in a state of fiery liquefaction; that it was in this state that it took its form; and that the interior of the earth must therefore be a vitrified and still warm mass. But to Buffon alone belongs the conjectural history of the transition from the primitive *Vulcanian* state to the *Neptunian* state, a true revelation of genius. Whatever, indeed, may have been the primitive state, and whatever may be the present state of the centre of the globe, the two successive reigns of fire and water on the surface can no longer be doubted.

"This man," exclaimed the sceptic Hume, with stupefaction, on reading the first volumes of Buffon, — "this man gives, to things which no human eye has seen, a probability almost equal to evidence."

Digitized by Google

This burst of admiration would have been still better justified by the truly unequalled book in which Buffon, a septuagenarian, in 1778, gave the finishing stroke to the labors of half a century, and vivified the final conceptions of his science by an unheard-of power of imagination. *The Epochs of Nature* seem written on granite by some Titan, the contemporary of the successive revolutions and progress of our planet. They are no longer scientific discussions and considerations, but cosmogomy itself evoked from the uttermost depths of time. We behold the boiling of the burning mass of the planet in fusion; we see it sink towards the poles and swell at the equator by the gradual diminution of this immense heat. The vitrified mass hardens. The primitive mountains rise like blisters on the surface of a gigantic globe of melted metal. The heat continues to decrease; the ethereal ocean of vapors that floated around the globe condenses, falls back, and covers the face of the earth. Life appears: the innumerable beings, the remains of which are to furnish the calcareous rocks, are born in the waters. Prodigious caverns, hollowed at the same time that the mountains rose, by an inverse effect, sink deeper, swallow up a part of the ocean, and uncover the continents. The vegetable kingdom is born,[1] — the primitive vegetation which is to be transformed into coal, bitumen, and peat, like the first animals into conchiferous rocks. The volcanoes are kindled by the struggle of the waters and the internal fire. The new rocks and the secondary mountains are formed by the sea, which alternately invades and abandons the different parts of the firm earth, and which determines the figure of the continents by the direction of its movements. The separation of the two great continents, at first united at the north, and the rupture of several isthmuses, which puts the vast gulfs, lakes, or interior seas again in communication with the ocean, finally gives to the earth its present aspect. Life, however, improves its forms: the quadrupeds and the other land animals are born near the poles, and descend towards the equator, as well as the vegetables, in proportion as the earth cools. The proportions of these first-born of the earth are gigantic, formed as they are under the empire of a still enormous caloric power; but the animal creation is neither unique nor uniform. The great and primitive appearance of the quadrupeds takes place at the north of Asia, whence they spread to the rest of our hemisphere and

[1] Buffon thus makes the birth of vegetation subsequent to that of the animals, instead of admitting a primitive maritime vegetation corresponding with the primitive animals.

Digitized by Google

North America before the separation of the continents: but South America remains closed to our animal races; it has its separate creation, more recent and weaker.[1]

The great and last work of creation, MAN, appears at last, after the quadrupeds, in the high lands of the north of Asia, and closes the genesis of our planet. There is only one human race, which is modified by the climates and the different conditions of existence. The first men, weak and miserable, unite, arm themselves, take possession of the element of fire, and settle the earth by agriculture. The first community is organized on the high table-lands of Asia, between the fortieth and fifty-fifth degrees of north latitude.[2] The revolutions of Nature and the war of the elements are succeeded by the revolutions and wars of the human race. *Six hundred centuries* were needed for Nature to attain an orderly and peaceful state: how many will it need for men to arrive at the same point? If the world were at peace, how much influence would the power of man have over that of Nature, by entirely applying itself thereto! What modifications have already been wrought by the clearing and draining of lands, the domestication of animals, the cultivation and grafting of plants, and the peopling of uninhabited territories! What moral and physical progress is still to be hoped from the human species! The superstitious terrors which bowed it before threatening and unknown phenomena have been dispelled in proportion as it has seen tranquillity reëstablished in Nature, and has learned to comprehend its operations. Fear and false honor at first ruled the human race; then blind and sterile pleasure reigned: now man at length perceives that his true glory is science; and his true happiness, peace.

[1] This great fact, divined by Buffon, has been not only confirmed, but amplified, by modern discoveries. Australia has also its separate animal series; and something analogous has been discovered in the Island of Madagascar, which is perhaps the remnant of a continent distinct from Africa. We cannot even mention here the many other admirable laws revealed by Buffon touching the distribution of beings over the surface of the globe.

[2] It was precisely in this region that the mysterious *Arya* was located, the traditions of which have been discovered in our days by philology and ethnography, and where the ancestors of our Indo-European race lived in proximity to the Semitic, Canaanitish, and Mongolian races. Buffon seems to have borrowed this idea from Bailli's *Histoire de l'astronomie ancienne*, published in 1775 and the years following. Bailli went farther: in conformity with ingenious conjectures, the bases of which have been overthrown by science, he fancied that he discerned there the traces of a high primitive civilization anterior to the historic ages. Buffon believes, therefore, that Europe was peopled from Asia, then North America from the North of Asia and Europe; and that men crossed the Isthmus of Panama, the mountains of which arrested the animals, and spread thence through South America.

Digitized by Google

This magnificent history of the earth terminates thus with a hymn to human perfectibility.

The errors that may be pointed out in the *Epochs of Nature* pertained to the very imperfect state of science:[1] the truths were Buffon's.

The power with which Buffon discerned, through the darkness of ages, the succession of the general effects of Nature, will doubtless remain his chief claim to glory. He attempted to penetrate farther, and to lay hold of those causes, that essence of things, which, according to himself, is inaccessible to our mind. The grandeur here is still the same, but without the clearness. The variations and contradictions into which the force of the imagination at times hurries away this vast intellect still serve at least successively to bring vividly to view the different phases of the *Isis of a thousand names*. It cannot indeed be said that Buffon is deficient in metaphysical genius: but he lacks method; he does not always observe Descartes' precept concerning clear and distinct ideas, or his own concerning the order and concatenation of thoughts.

On putting aside the veil in which Buffon shrouds his ideas, desirous as he is of not following the philosophical party in its open conflict with traditional beliefs,[2] on seeking to know what was at heart the religion of this prophet of Nature, we discern these ideas, we do not say at which he paused, but among which he fluctuated, about the middle of his scientific career, a few years after the publication of his first volumes, and which are, so to speak, the spirit of the *History of Animals*.

[1] The gravest of these errors relates to the progressive cooling of the globe. Nature, according to Buffon, will perish by cold within ninety-three thousand years. He was ignorant of what science has since established; namely, that the earth's own heat, increasing in proportion as we descend into the interior of the globe, at least to an unknown depth, is almost nothing on the surface in comparison with the solar heat. The complete internal cooling would not, therefore, produce a polar temperature over the whole surface of the earth. Mairan was the first to point out the earth's innate heat, which he attributed to a central fire; but he erroneously believed this heat greater than that of the sun, and Buffon erred in his footsteps. Buffon allowed the earth, from the moment that it began to cool, about seventy-five thousand years' existence. The first organized beings began to appear about the middle of this period. These figures, which appear prodigious to the reader's imagination, disappear before the almost incommeasurable depth of time calculated since by Fourier as necessary for this same cooling.

[2] Warmly attacked by the Jansenist journal, *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, as early as 1750, he was censured by the Sorbonne in 1754, after the publication of the fourth volume of the *Histoire Naturelle*. He protested his submission to the Church, and gave the Sorbonne all the satisfaction that it required: by way of compensation, he raised the veil a little higher than he had yet done, in the following volumes, in which are found the *Vues sur la Nature*.

Digitized by Google

Nature is a vital, immense, and universal power which embraces every thing and animates every thing. It neither creates nor annihilates any thing: it changes, dissolves, and regenerates. Time, space, and matter are its means. It acts on matter by general forces which are limited and measured by space and time. The principal ones of these forces are attraction and repulsion, the second of which is reducible to the first, and heat. Matter is divided into molecules, some of which are in the inorganic state, subject only to attraction and repulsion; others, penetrated by heat, are raised to the organic and living state: life and animation are a physical property of matter, and not a metaphysical degree of being. The inorganic bodies are simple aggregates: this is not the case with respect to the organized bodies. Here a new principle intervenes: it is indeed the action of heat which causes the organic molecules to group themselves in combination with the inorganic particles which they draw with them; but the form of these groupings, the diversity of beings, is determined by another cause, — by special forces, *internal moulds*, in which the individuals of the same species take form successively and indefinitely by means of generation.[1] The apparent individuals are merely phenomena; they are nothing in the universe: the species are the only beings in Nature, perpetual beings, as ancient and as permanent as Nature herself. Each species makes but a single unit in Nature, who disregards numbers in individuals, and sees them only as fleeting shadows of which the species is the substance.[2]

We see how much his conceptions have changed since the time when he proclaimed that there are neither genuses nor species in Nature, but only individuals. Now he still denies the genuses, the small families in the great ones, but he substitutes species for individuals. He has passed over a transition at which he should have stopped: namely, that the individual is the only real being; that the species is a necessary abstraction, a conception founded on the nature of things,[3] but which may be extended from species to genuses. He was to return to it.

[1] The *internal moulds* of Buffon are nothing else than the plastic force or substantial forms of ancient scholastic philosophy.

[2] By carrying these principles to their ultimate consequences, it is found, that, if individuals are nothing but phenomena, species are nothing but forms, animating forces: the only real beings are the molecules, if, however, the molecules are not indefinitely divisible (and metaphysics demonstrates that they are); in which case there is only one real being, the universal substance, Nature. Our summary is taken chiefly from the *Vues sur la Nature*, intercalated into the *Hist. des Animaux*.

[3] *Hist. naturelle*, t. IV. ch. *de l'Ane*, 1753.

Digitized by Google

If the individual is only a phenomenon, a momentary association of molecules, determined by the *internal mould*, which is, so to speak, the collective soul of the species, it is superfluous to assert that the individual has no soul or unity, consequently no spontaneity, no activity of its own. Animals, Buffon says, like Descartes, are wholly mechanical; but Buffon only means by this that all their actions are fatally determined, and not that they are insensible. He accords, on the contrary, to animals, at least to the higher animals, all the passions and sentiments of man. Sentiments without sentient subject, without individuality! it will be said—but this is the general objection to every materialistic system, whether man or animals are in question.

Before denying individuals, Buffon had begun by rejecting the hypothesis of the preëxistence of germs, conceived by Swammerdam and Malebranche, modified by Leibnitz, and supported by two eminent contemporaries, Charles Bonnet and Haller. He had undertaken to substitute for this an ingenious and complex system of generation, in which spontaneous generation, so much derided by Voltaire, with the mountains of shells and the fish-man,[1] played a very important part. According to him, the inferior beings, whether animals or vegetables, especially all the animalculæ, are generated by the spontaneous assemblage of organic molecules, while the better developed and more highly perfected beings are propagated by a constant succession of generations. If all the organized beings should disappear, the organic molecules would soon replace them by the appearance of new species.

Through a mixture of profound views, ideas chimerical or based on insufficient observation, and dreams which seem borrowed from the credulous imagination of the sixteenth century or of antiquity, may be seen the transition towards the theory which is styled to-day *the epigenesis*, and which substitutes for the preëxistence of the germ, physical unity developing eccentrically, the concentric formation of the parts towards an invisible centre.[2] Buffon, despite some variation, agrees with Hippocrates and Galen as to the equal coöperation of both sexes in reproduction.

Had Buffon, then, no other God than Nature? Were his splendid

[1] Voltaire's jests on the eels of Needham will be remembered.

[2] This beautiful theory, outlined by Harvey, and resumed in the eighteenth century by Needham and Wolf, did not definitively make its way into French science, and free itself from the obscurities and hypotheses of its origin, to enter upon its positive period, till an epoch subsequent to the limits of our work. — See the luminous treatise on *Organogénie* by M. Serres, published in the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*.

Digitized by Google

invocations to the Creator, blended with biblical metaphors, nought but oratorical precautions? . . . It seems as if his innermost thoughts revealed naturalistic or physical Pantheism, the opposite point of view to the mathematical and spiritualistic Pantheism of Spinoza: the one absorbed in the contemplation of the being in itself, of unity, the other considering only the being manifested in the multiple; the one shutting himself up in the ideal, the other in the real. All the German Pantheism, Goethe, Schelling, and Hegel, like all the schools of analogous tendencies in France, were to proceed from Spinoza, combined with Buffon. Spinoza had left only a few solitary thinkers as his successors. After Buffon, these ideas took a prodigious start; but this was at first beyond the Rhine, whence they returned to us. The God-Nature, the Creator identified with the creation, the divine Force without consciousness of itself, and assuming this reflected consciousness only in deified man,[1] are contained herein in principle.

It is because the personal and free God, the God that loves and is loved, is lacking in this universe, the cause and effect together, that we feel at times, through the resplendent Nature of Buffon, the breath of an icy blast, like the blast of that cold by which our globe is to perish. Love is not there: the soul of things is absent.

Yet this naturalism is not materialism. Two contradictory principles struggle in Buffon, without being able to find their equilibrium. His obscure theory of *internal moulds* is not the only thing foreign to materialism. The latter admits only of physical individuals; atoms, having all properties in themselves. The *internal moulds*, on the contrary, are metaphysical beings: if they are not Platonic archetypes existing in the intelligent world, in the thought of God, if they are in Nature, they are there, we know not where, we know not how, independent of all extent. But it is elsewhere, on a much clearer subject, that Buffon manifests a fully decided spiritualism; namely, in the *Dissertation on the Nature of Man*. He is here more than Cartesian. He declares that the existence of the soul is certain; that this existence and ourselves make but one; that, on the contrary, the existence of our body and of other external objects is doubtful to any one who reasons without prejudice: he proves by the closest logic that it is impossible to demonstrate the existence of matter. We have just pointed out the transition from Spinoza to Goethe and Hegel: we

[1] The individual man, says Buffon, through history and science, takes cognizance of the human race and of himself, and becomes, so to speak, the human race and the universe.

Digitized by Google

now find the transition from the scepticism of Berkeley to the transcendental idealism of Fichte. The sincerity of Buffon can no longer be doubted here as in his hymns to the God of Moses.[1] Poetic figures are no longer in question: there is nothing in all his work more strongly reasoned than that which concerns the unity and personality of the human soul. There are arguments therein to which none can reply. An illustrious historian has remarked with astonishment that Buffon seems much more fully persuaded of the immortality of the soul than of the existence of God. Buffon, in fact, in this, as in many other things, is the antipodes of Voltaire.

The logic of common sense did not stop at these anomalies of philosophic genius. Atheism[2] and materialism remained united to the multitude, although it was less rare to meet men in France who believed in God, and doubted the soul, than those who believed in the soul, and did not believe in the personality of God.

It is singular that it should have been the philosopher of Nature who undertook to maintain between man and animals an absolute difference which metaphysicians had been inclined to abolish since the days of Leibnitz. The reason was that the spiritualism of Buffon was exaggerated Cartesianism, taken according to the letter rather than the spirit, and approaching Spinozism anew on this side; namely, that reason, understood in the restricted sense of the word, is the soul or the spirit itself, metaphysical unity attributed to man alone. Every thing that is not reason, every thing that is common to man and animals, is material. Sensation and sentiment are to this one and the same thing. The soul remains foreign to it. The sensations or sentiments end only in a certain *internal material sense*, common to man and animals, and which is in Buffon an obscure reminiscence of the second soul, — the *sensitive soul* of the ancients and the scholastics. Condillac, less elevated and less sublime, but more exact, more logical, and more rigorous in defining his terms, completely refutes him in his remarkable *Treatise on Animals*, and shows clearly that sensation is in the soul as well as in the thought; that to feel, it is necessary to have a soul, a unity; and that the animals have this.[3]

[1] M. Villemain.

[2] We employ this term in the popular acceptation with regret; for naturalism ascribes to the word *Nature* a mystical sense much better rendered by the term of Pantheism than by that of Atheism.

[3] By way of compensation, Buffon clearly establishes, in opposition to Condillac and Helvetius, that the superiority of man over the animals is not the effect of a greater degree of perfection of organs.

Digitized by Google

The metaphysics of Buffon has strange moral consequences. He condemns the passions of the heart and imagination as errors of the *internal material sense*. Our soul has been given us to know, and not to feel. The sage is sufficient unto himself. "Why does love make the happiness of all animals, and the unhappiness of man? Because nothing but the physical part of this passion is good: the moral part is worth nothing." He sees in the moral part of love nothing but vanity. "In wishing to force himself upon sentiment, man only abuses his being, and makes a void in his heart which nothing is capable of filling."[1]

The normal man of Buffon would be, therefore, a man devoid of the best part of the human soul, an intellect without affection.[2]

There are still, however, happily for the *Natural History*, contradictions here between the theorist and the observing painter and poet. After denying moral love in man, he discovers and admires it in certain animals, especially in the birds, the lasting attachments and domestic habits of which he depicts with so much grace, and even emotion. In his descriptions of animals, he often forgets systems to abandon himself to the naïve inspiration of things. He interests himself in his heroes, in all those inhabitants of the earth and air which he follows, with the eye of the mind, to the recesses of their deserts and forests. He pities their tribes, subjugated and degenerating under the tyranny of man. He seems speaking of fallen peoples when he shows the superior races attempting to organize themselves, with a gleam of intelligence, a kind of choice, concert, and common views, then dispersed by the terror of man, and *diminishing in faculties and talents*.

"What they have become, and what they will still become, does not, perhaps, indicate sufficiently what they have been, and what they might still be. Who knows, if the human race were annihilated, to which among them would belong the sceptre of the earth?" He thus grants them perfectibility; and his imagination carries him so far as to make of them moral beings, some species good and generous, others cruel and perfidious, — almost virtuous or criminal species: he ascribes to them sentiments and conduct in accordance with the rank and character assigned to them by antique symbolism, according to external usages.

It is precisely this that makes the *Natural History* a unique book, the very faults of which, in a scientific point of view, are

[1] *Discours sur la nature des animaux.*

[2] He excuses friendship, however, since it is an attachment of the reason, and not a passion.

Digitized by Google

incomparable beauties in a literary point of view. Every form of praise has been exhausted on its pictures, which remain, so to speak, the very types of eloquence.

Another inconsistency in Buffon had happier results. Genius naturally tends to the truth, like plants to light and air. Warped and bent, it always makes an instinctive effort to straighten itself and to find the light. Buffon had attained the point of substituting blind Nature for Providence, and of denying to all beings, man excepted, animic unity, real individuality: yet from this he attained, by the synthetic progress of a mind which generalized and simplified all that it touched, the most religious idea that could preside over the natural sciences,—that idea of the unity of type and organic composition which shows so clearly the immanence of a Supreme Intelligence in the universe; a law so elevated that it is difficult to conceive how it was accessible to man, and so simple and clear that it is still more inconceivable why it was not universally accepted as soon as perceived; the fundamental law of the physical world, which contains in itself another, still sublimer law, the transition from the material world to the moral world,—the law of progress. Aristotle, Newton, and less mighty geniuses, had caught a glimpse of it. Buffon seized it and embraced it with a broad glance: it was reserved to one of his successors to reduce it to a scientific state.[2] The essential feature of the theory, the analogy or correspondence of organs in the animals most unlike, was very clearly enunciated, as early as 1753, in one of the first chapters of the *History of Quadrupeds* (art. *Ane*). According to considerations strongly supported, Buffon concluded, that, in creating the animals, "the Supreme Being seems to have wished to employ but one idea, and to vary it at the same time in every possible manner. This plan," he says a little farther on,[3] "is constantly the same, constantly followed, from man to the ape, from the ape to the quadrupeds, from the quadrupeds to the cetacea, the birds, the fishes, and the reptiles. This plan is a faithful copy of living Nature; . . . and if we wish to go farther, and to pass from that which lives to that which

[1] A bold and investigating spirit, Maupertuis, had just materialized this idea, in a Latin dissertation printed in Germany under a pseudonyme, by advancing the theory that all the animal species proceeded from a first animal, the prototype of all the rest. He also maintained therein that all the molecules are sensible and intelligent. — See *Œuvres de Diderot*, Paris, 1821, t. II. pp. 149–197.

[2] *Étienne Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire.*

[3] In 1756; *Hist. des Singes.*

Digitized by Google

vegetates, we see this plan descending by degrees from the reptiles to the insects, from the insects to the worms, from the worms to the zoöphytes, from the zoöphytes to the plants, and, although deteriorating in all its external parts, nevertheless preserving the same foundation and the same character, the principal features of which are nutrition, growth, and reproduction, — traits general and common to every organized substance, — traits eternal and divine." . . .

How incomprehensible that he should have had one foot on these sublime heights, and the other in the obscure mists of materialism!

Buffon, however, during his whole life, was a prey to contending ideas: his brain seems a sublime chaos, threaded with innumerable lightnings, and full of the germs of future worlds. By the side of the great thought of the unity of the physical type he sets up another conception, which, without being rigorously deduced therefrom, may be readily connected with it,[1] but which is absolutely irreconcilable with the fundamental part which Buffon ascribed, about the same time, to the species, the *internal moulds*. The nature of animals, he says, may vary and even absolutely change with time, and under the influence of climate. The species change their nature; that is, they improve or deteriorate.

The species, from this point of view, is no longer a reality, at once positive and mystical, but only the first degree of the series of classifications: to prevent this opinion from reducing Nature to a mere universal illusion, a succession of appearances through which the only real substance may be discerned, it must be joined to a firm belief in the individuality of beings, persisting under the variations of forms.

It is not easy to tear one's self from this genius, who exercises a fascination like that of Nature herself. We will close by repeating that Buffon foresaw, invited, and paved the way for all the ulterior progress of geology and the other natural sciences, and particularly of that mysterious paleontology by which Cuvier was to reveal to us a whole creation buried in the bowels of the earth. It may be said that Buffon contained in himself the great naturalists destined to render the nineteenth century illustrious by their very rivalry: those who have denied him, as well as those who have acknowledged him as their master, have proceeded from him, as all the modern metaphysicians have proceeded from Des-

[1] The unity of type may be admitted without admitting the mutability of species.

Digitized by Google

cartes. If his eye was troubled on the dizzy heights of metaphysics, he saw clearly in the immensity of the external world; and the temple which he erected to Nature will forever remain the object of the admiration of men, though its sanctuary is veiled with a cloud.[1]

The theories of Buffon were not immediately followed by a great direct growth: the majority of the special scholars, whom he had offended by his unjust disdain of the classifications of Linnæus, rejected his authority; the public admired rather than comprehended him; but the enthusiasm for Nature reacted in a general manner on the militant philosophy. Naturalism, partially veiled by the prudence of Buffon, and combated in him by a remnant of Cartesian metaphysics, broke forth in another writer of very different character, as impetuous, as overflowing, and as full of unreservedness and daring, as Buffon was solemn and reticent; a writer, moreover, inspired by his own spontaneity, more than by the example or influence of any one whomsoever.

Denis Diderot, born in 1713, the son of a cutler of Langres, reared among the Jesuits, like Voltaire, and destined at first to the ecclesiastical profession, then an attorney's clerk at Paris, early manifested a very lively taste for the ancient and modern languages, mathematics, and every branch of knowledge accessible to the human mind, together with an insurmountable repugnance to confining himself to any special vocation whatever. Abandoned by his father on account of his refusal to adopt a profession, he lived long by expedients, testing the prodigious elasticity of his independent nature by innumerable petty ills; enduring poverty sometimes with careless gayety, sometimes with bitterness speedily forgotten, and preferring free fancy to every thing. His marriage to a young girl as poor as himself, an honest creature, but too much inferior to him in intellect, and of a character different from his own, effected his reconciliation with his family, but did not long fix the mobility of his passions. He had begun to write. At the solicitation of a mercenary and needy mistress, he made for a publisher an imitation rather than a translation of the *Essay on Merit and Virtue* by Shaftesbury, the friend of Locke (1745); a singular beginning of a career full of

[1] On Buffon, see his *Éloge*, by Vicq-d'Azyr; id., by Condorcet; Étienne Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. BUFFON; Cuvier, *Biographie universelle*, art. BUFFON; Flourens, *Vie de Buffon*; Villemain, *Tableau de la littérature française au XVIII. siècle*, t. I. 2d part, p. 351; Hérault de Séchelles, *Une visite à Montbard*; Madame Necker, *Mémoires*.

Digitized by Google

contrasts. The principles of Shaftesbury, to which Diderot seemed at that time to subscribe, were those of true *theism*, as he calls it; that is, not of the materialistic and inconsistent Deism of Bolingbroke and Voltaire, but of spiritualistic and Platonic Deism, such as was about to reappear gloriously in France. Shaftesbury was a precursor of Rousseau. "There is no virtue," he says, "without believing in God; there is no happiness without virtue."[1] Diderot does not throw much emphasis into this book: it is neither the impassioned cry of the heart, nor the expression of a profound meditation of the intellect.

A second work, this time original, dictated by the same pecuniary necessities, soon appeared anonymously: this was *The Philosophic Thoughts* (1747), animated by that vigor of tone and warm coloring which were to be the distinctive characteristics of the author. There is still some Deism in *The Thoughts*. We find here the saying, so much quoted, "*Enlarge God;* show him to the child, not in the church, but everywhere and always." Nevertheless, at the bottom, scepticism rules. Spiritual feeling, the feeling of the abstract and invisible, is absolutely lacking in the author, although he is a mathematician; the feeling of external nature, of the visible and the imaginable, is very powerful in him: we feel flesh and blood palpitating everywhere in Diderot, like the nerves and the subtlest senses in Voltaire. The philosophy of pure reason being incompatible with his native tendencies, he might have paused at that of sentiment, as the infant Scotch school was doing at this moment under Hutcheson, and as a more brilliant genius was about to do in France: but the ardor of flesh and blood, the spirit of dispute and paradox, the false method which sought to subject the operations of the soul either to the demonstrations of geometry or the experimental observations of the physical sciences; lastly, that species of vanity which instinctively impels some minds always to wish to exceed the boldest in daring, — made him disregard, not the principle of sentiment, but its consequences, and what may be called its method, and drew him into all kinds of excesses of ideas.

Vast projects were fermenting in his brain: while he was preparing for their execution, two remarkable writings were suggested

[1] Shaftesbury, like Newton, had foreseen the consequences of the system of Locke, and made grave reservations: he would have acknowledged, had he lived, the brilliant protest of Clarke against sensualism. — See the *Cours d'Histoire de la Philosophie moderne* by M. Cousin, first series, t. IV.; *École écossaise, Introduction.* — See *Essai sur le Mérite*, etc., in t. I., *Œuvres de Diderot*, Paris, Brière, 1821.

Digitized by Google

to him by the experiments which the philanthropic and scientific genius of the times was then making to restore to intercourse with their fellows those unfortunates whom Nature puts in some sort outside of humanity; namely, *The Letter on The Blind* (1748), and *The Letter on the Deaf Mutes* (1751); the first on occasion of the operations which Réaumur and others were successfully attempting for the removal of cataract, the second with respect to the labors of Pereira, the precursor of the illustrious Abbé de L'Épée, who had presented to the Academy of Sciences, in 1748, deaf mutes educated by his care. *The Letter on the Blind* contained numerous observations and considerations as learned as ingenious, but mingled with unsound and purely negative views. Diderot attacked therein, through the medium of Saunderson, a blind scholar, who had recently died in England, the proofs of Divine Providence founded on the order of the world, and made him put forward a pretended chaos, from which Nature rose by degrees to an imperfect order by force of different combinations, as if Nature were a being endowed with reflection, a demiurge of limited intellect taught to do better by means of schools. The conclusion in favor of the God of Clarke and Newton seems little more than oratorical precaution.

This *Letter*, the authorship of which was discovered by the police, cost Diderot three months' imprisonment at Vincennes; a captivity celebrated in the annals of philosophy, and to which we shall revert. The irreligious escapade of Saunderson was the pretext: the true cause was a jest which had piqued a mistress of the Count d'Argenson.

The Letter on the Deaf Mutes presented interesting views concerning the order in which ideas appear to the deaf mute, and what Diderot calls the natural order or the *animal language:* it is probable that the Abbé de L'Épée profited thereby.[1]

These writings, mixed with mathematical labors, had merely been episodes to Diderot, then occupied with a colossal enterprise which was to remain his chief glory. Some publishers, in 1748, had proposed to him to translate the English Encyclopædia of Chambers, compiled, in great part, from French books. A great thought illuminated the brain and inspired the heart of Diderot.

[1] This *Letter* also contains a very striking estimate of the French language, "better suited," he says, "to the sciences and philosophy, and less to poetry and eloquence, than the Greek, Latin, Italian, or English. It is the language of the mind and of good sense: the others are the languages of the imagination and the passions. Our language will be that of Truth, should she ever return to earth." — See *Œuvres de Diderot*, t. II., 1821. A reservation should be made with respect to eloquence.

Digitized by Google

More than one attempt had been made, as early as the sixteenth century, and even the Middle Ages, to unite in one framework the general picture of human knowledge; but the sciences were then too poor in facts, and too devoid of method, for these first encyclopædias to be any thing more than shapeless embryos. The immense progress effected within a hundred and fifty years made Diderot judge that the moment had come to collect and consecrate the fruits of this progress, and to shelter the deposit of the knowledge of man from revolutions, in order to secure it for posterity, *the being that never dies*. The imperfect publication of Chambers could serve only as a starting-point. Diderot associated himself with D'Alembert, the man best fitted, by his science and his orderly and persevering mind, to share the direction of this prodigious work. Both invited the coöperation of choice writers of all kinds, and succeeded in forming a most imposing literary lay association, destined to do for the sum of human knowledge, in the spirit of modern times, what the learned congregations of Catholicism had done for theology and erudition. All the great names of the eighteenth century were found therein. Nothing less was dreamed of than the universal monument of the human mind, the Bible of perfectibility.

The prospectus of the *Encyclopædia* was issued by Diderot in November, 1750. The sentiment of utility, of positive applications and improvements, is the prevailing idea in this fragment of a great composition. Diderot states therein that the work has a twofold object: first, the *Encyclopædia* proper, that is, the genealogical tree, the order and concatenation of human knowledge; secondly, the analytical dictionary of the sciences, arts, and trades. This second object was the essential one, to which the other was only the introduction. The encyclopedical order was arbitrary in his sight: he treated it as Buffon treated classifications. Nature is a unit, says Buffon: Science is a unit, adds Diderot with Condillac. This is true; but in the unity of Science, as in that of Nature, there are fundamental divisions pertaining to the essence of things: indeed, to discern these essential diversities in unity, other metaphysics are needed than that of Locke or Condillac. Diderot refers, as authority for the system which he has adopted as being relatively the best, to Bacon, "that extraordinary genius, who, laying the plan of a universal dictionary of the arts and sciences at a time when there were, so to speak, neither arts nor sciences, . . . in the presence of the impossibility of writing the history of what was known, wrote the history of what was to

Digitized by Google

be learned." This is the finest and best deserved eulogy ever pronounced on Bacon.

The material of the encyclopedical dictionary may be reduced to three heads, — the sciences, the liberal arts, and the mechanical arts. Diderot nobly set forth the views of practical utility which led the authors to connect with the principles of the sciences and liberal arts the history of their origin and progress. Here materials at least abounded, with a few exceptions; but the mechanical arts, hitherto imprisoned in the secrecy of their obscure workshops with the men who cultivated them, were an unknown world to be discovered. Diderot displayed therein an activity, variety, and pliancy of faculties, truly incomparable. He made his way into all the manufactories, and learned and practised almost all the trades in order to be able to describe them. He sums up, in two pages of his *Prospectus*, the labors of Hercules: too often exaggerated and bombastic, he is here simple, because he is truly great. He is fully conscious of the high morality of a work which is the rehabilitation of manual labor, the labor formerly termed *servile;* he constitutes himself the historian, so far as it is possible to be such, of that long series of sacrificed generations who had never possessed a history, and to whom civilization owes its comfort, and intellect its indispensable instruments; he erects a monument to the working-classes "by the exposition of the science of the trades, the admirable legacy of the nameless geniuses of these humiliated classes.[1] By a prophetic instinct, Diderot devoted himself to the glorification of the arts and manufactures at the moment when they were about to enter into that career of marvels hitherto more brilliant, perhaps, than profitable to the real happiness of humanity, but which would furnish to the human race powerful instruments of happiness, when it should have learned how to elevate moral progress to a level with material progress.[2]

The first two volumes of the *Encyclopædia* speedily followed the *Prospectus* of Diderot. The *Preliminary Dissertation* of D'Alembert, which served as a peristyle to the vast edifice, was received with great applause. He begins, it is needless to say, by

[1] *I. Reynaud, Encyclopédie nouvelle, art. Encyclopédie.* M. Reynaud sums up the various encyclopedical systems proposed from Bacon to that the sketch of which he presents.

[2] From 1765 dates the first of the great inventions by which the Scotchman, James Watt, improving upon the discoveries and machinery of Salomon de Caux, Papin, and Newcomen, applied steam to manufactures, and decupled the manufacturing power, first of England, then of all manufacturing nations.

Digitized by Google

resolving, according to Locke and Condillac, the problem of the origin of our knowledge: nevertheless, his metaphysics here is much better than might have been expected. He asserts that a kind of instinct, more certain than reason itself, makes us affirm the existence of external objects, including our own bodies; reason demonstrating nothing in this respect. This is an excellent correction of Descartes, and the only possible refutation of idealistic scepticism.

D'Alembert sets out, therefore, from the indubitable existence of our body, and the necessity of preserving it, in order to show the generation of human notions. We shall not follow him in his historical generation of our knowledge, the order of which is open to much dispute: all system on this question of fact will always be contestable, much more than the encyclopedical order itself, which may be reduced to metaphysical principles. As to the acquisition of the ideas of mind and matter, and that of God, he remains within the received notions, and goes so far as to say a few prudent and precautionary words concerning the necessity of revelation; but we cannot attribute to the same cause the opinions which he then emits concerning certainty, when, with the same tendency that he has shown in the instinctive affirmation of the reality of bodies, he lays down the principle of sentiment by the side of rational evidence. Sentiment is of two kinds: first, the conscience, or the sentiment of the good, which is applied to the moral truths, and which has the same power over us as the evidence of the mind attached to the speculative truths, — this may be called *the evidence of the heart*, as the evidence of the mind may be called *the sentiment of the true;* secondly, the sentiment of the beautiful, to which we owe genius and taste, — genius is the sentiment that creates, and taste the sentiment that judges.[1]

All this was excellent; it was Descartes corrected and completed with the aid of Pascal: these principles were the same that Hutcheson was teaching at that moment in Scotland, with less precision and luminousness, perhaps, than D'Alembert. It seemed as if the true way was opened. The doctrine of sentiment, applied to the interrogation of the conscience of the human race, suffices to discover all the necessary truths; but abstract principles do not bear their fruits of themselves if the living soul does not fructify them with its breath. Setting out from such premises, D'Alembert ended only in scepticism; Diderot, only in

[1] Diderot, in the article *Beautiful*, denies, however, that the beautiful is exclusively a matter of sentiment, and not of reason and understanding.

Digitized by Google

a confused naturalism; and the truths which they enunciated did not prevent Helvetius a few years later from denying sentiment with every thing else, as we have seen.

The elevated and just views of the *Preliminary Dissertation*, nevertheless, preserved their value; and it is important to point out the improvements introduced into the system of Bacon by the two directors of the *Encyclopædia*. Revealed theology is no longer outside of human philosophy. "Revealed theology is nothing else than reason applied to revealed facts: it pertains to history by dogmas, and to philosophy by consequences." Poetry, also, is no longer a simple imitation of Nature, a simple *child of the memory*, but a creative faculty: all the fine arts are brothers of poetry, and "are raised from the humiliation which they suffered in the system of the English philosopher."[1] The mathematics, instead of being placed as an appendage of the science of Nature, are set in the first rank in the metaphysics of Nature. It is evident that Descartes has passed between Bacon and D'Alembert. The latter, moreover, in his beautiful picture of the progress of the sciences, renders to Descartes, if not all the justice which is due him, at least all that he could obtain from the eighteenth century. There is a great distance between this respectful language and the scoffs of Voltaire. In short, the classification of D'Alembert and Diderot, made by a sceptic and a materialist, is much more spiritualistic than that of the religious Bacon.[2] The *Preliminary Dissertation* is not below the renown that it obtained among its contemporaries. Despite the objections which may be raised, this work of a judicious, sagacious, and extended mind, who expresses himself in elegant, clear, and sober language, remains one of the best that we possess after those of the first-class geniuses.

The immense enterprise did not long proceed without obstacles. The adversaries of philosophy had understood the scope of the *Encyclopædia:* they saw that the innovators were marshalling themselves in battle array; that they had a camp and headquarters. The departure of Voltaire, and the premature old age of Montesquieu, who was declining, had given rise to vain hopes: the destiny of philosophy reposed only on one or two heads, how-

[1] J. Reynaud, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. *Encyclopédie*.

[2] It is well also to observe here, that D'Alembert censures the disdain of his age for the study of the ancients; acknowledges, as Voltaire does continually, that the *works of mind* (of pure literature) are, in general, inferior to those of the preceding age, and very clearly gives the reasons.

Digitized by Google

ever illustrious they might be. The Jesuits had requested to be intrusted with the articles on theology: this kind of compromise had been refused them. They seized the first opportunity to assume the offensive. In November, 1751, an Abbé de Prades, one of the writers of the *Encyclopædia*, took a fancy to support a thesis in the Sorbonne, in which Voltarian Deism and Sensualism were scarcely disguised. The abbé, censured by the faculty, fled to Berlin, where Frederick and Voltaire received him with open arms. Meanwhile, at Paris, the thesis was laid to the charge of Diderot. The adversaries had a fine opportunity: the printing of the *Encyclopædia* was suspended by decree of the council, February 7, 1752. Diderot's papers were seized. The Jesuits counted on taking possession of them, and finishing the book in their own fashion. A public clamor was raised. Lamoignon de Malesherbes, the first president of the court of aids, and the director of publication, and consequently of the censorship, was devoted at heart to the freedom of thinking and writing: he did his best. The Count d'Argenson, who had first persecuted Diderot, then patronized the *Encyclopædia*, then abandoned it, was gained over anew. The court yielded: the authors were entreated to continue *a work honorable to the nation;* and the third volume appeared in November, 1753, with a preface in which Diderot claimed the victory.

The victory was neither complete nor definitive: the work advanced for some time in peace, only at the price of concessions and conciliations which the prudent D'Alembert imposed on Diderot, and which made Voltaire groan. "You admit articles worthy of the *Journal of Trévoux*," wrote Voltaire. "There are other articles, less conspicuous, in which all is repaired," answered D'Alembert: "time will distinguish between what we think and what we say."[1] Without setting at nought the excuse of men who wrote between the censorship and the *lettres de cachet*, it is allowable to say that it is not in this manner that the world is regenerated. Diderot, whose soul and hand were always open, stood aloof as much as possible from this dissimulation, and, if he did not say all that he thought, said nothing contrary to it. Several of his articles touching political philosophy, very remarkable in themselves, are still more so through their correspondence with greater works which were soon to appear above the

[1] See the correspondence of Voltaire and D'Alembert. D'Alembert contradicts himself on more than one point of his *Discours préliminaire*. His article *Fortuit*, for instance, shakes free will. Voltaire did not ask so much of him.

Digitized by Google

horizon. In the article *Authority*, which is very bold in language, he nevertheless still stops short of the transitory nature of the contract between the people and the prince, — a contract which neither the prince nor the people can change. But the article *Law* rises to higher regions. He lays down here the general conscience as the basis of law. "The general will" (the will of the human race), he says expressly, "is always right." The principle of the SOCIAL CONTRACT is comprised here.

It is impossible even to mention the principal works of the numerous writers of the *Encyclopædia*. We will only seize the opportunity to call to remembrance an eminent and unfortunate man, whom it is not permissible to forget in a review of French thinkers and writers, — the philosopher-grammarian Dumarsais, who died poor and obscure in 1756.

In the columns of the *Encyclopædia* had appeared not only new names, but a school, a new sect, allied with the philosophers without being confounded with them, — the sect of the ECONOMISTS, We shall recur hereafter to their persons and doctrines. On the confines of the two philosophical and economical groups, a young magistrate, whose vast intellect was adapted to every thing and interested in every thing, enriched the *Encyclopædia* by works of the highest scope on the philosophy of history, metaphysics, and philology; but it is not yet time to discuss in detail the name of TURGOT, to whom at that time a great destiny might be predicted.

The bigoted party meanwhile having regained some ascendency at court, after Damiens' attempt to assassinate the King (1757), the storm against philosophy commenced anew. A royal declaration, of unheard-of violence, was issued against the authors, printers, publishers, and hawkers of writings in contempt of religion and the royal authority, with death in every line. The simple offence of publication without permission led to the galleys for life.[1] This was partly atrocious, and partly ridiculous; for it was almost certain that no one would be hung, and that, should a few unhappy hawkers be sent to the galleys, *lettres de cachet* were the greatest peril that threatened the writers. The declaration remained an idle bugbear. Every thing was confined for some time to a war of the pen, — a shower of anti-philosophical pamphlets paid for by the court and the clergy, and written in general by mercenaries as devoid of talent as of religious faith.[2] An attempt

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 272, April 16, 1757.

[2] At the head of these pamphleteers was the critic Fréron, the editor of the journal *L'Année littéraire*, and the prototype of those writers without morality who defend

Digitized by Google

was made to turn the weapon of ridicule against the philosophers; and Palissot represented them on the stage in a comedy with Aristophanesque pretensions, which called forth terrible reprisals from Voltaire. The parliament and the Archbishop of Paris at last attacked the *Encyclopædia* directly. The parliament and the council of the King struck at the same time; and the license of the publishers was revoked (March, 1759). Orders had been given to the director of publication, Malesherbes, as in 1752, to seize Diderot's papers. Malesherbes hastened secretly to apprise him of it. "I have not time to sort them," replied the afflicted philosopher. "Send them to my house," said Melesherbes. It was done, and nothing was seized but what Diderot chose.[1]

The feeble attempts at persecution by a government served in this manner by its own agents could not go very far. The new directing minister, M. de Choiseul, disliked and somewhat feared the encyclopedists; but he disliked the clergy still more, and was very conciliatory to Voltaire, who thundered against the suspension of the great work, while Pope Clement XIII. applauded it in a brief of September, 1759. Ferney partially prevailed over the Vatican. The police were permitted to shut their eyes to the clandestine resumption of the printing. D'Alembert, however, weary of the prolonged struggle, was no longer willing to participate in the direction. Diderot, more courageous and constant, supported the burden alone to the end. Frederick II., then the Empress of Russia, Catharine II., alike desirous to do themselves honor at the expense of Louis XV., offered Diderot permission, one after the other, to finish the *Encyclopædia* in their States (1760–1763). The adroit Catharine, scarcely seated on a throne red with her husband's blood, was beginning that sys-

through speculation, with a vehemence made to order, the opinions that they do not hold. He was not absolutely without talent; but his worth has been greatly exaggerated in the kind of paradoxical rehabilitation which has been attempted with respect to him. A more honorable adversary of Voltaire was Lefranc de Pompignan, a man of conviction, who rendered himself ridiculous by excessive vanity, but in whom a few flashes of lofty poetry are found. A very curious monument of the reactionary spirit at court exists; namely, a letter in which is found the following passage: "What is becoming of our nation? The parliamentarians and encyclopedists have completely changed it. When one is sufficiently lacking in principle to recognize neither divinity nor master, he soon becomes the scum of nature; and this is what is happening to us." No one would divine who was the austere champion of the throne and altar who thus defended the principles of Bossuet: it was no other than Madame de Pompadour. — Letter to the Duke d'Aiguillon, 1759, ap. Lacretelle, t. IV.

[1] *Mémoires sur Diderot*, by his daughter, Madame de Vandeul, ap. *Mémoires, Correspondance et Ouvrages inédits de Diderot*, second edition, 1834, t. I. p. 31. — See also *L'Avertissement* prefixed to t. XIII. of the *Œuvres de Diderot*, 1821.

Digitized by Google

tem of flattery towards the men who ruled public opinion in Europe which Voltaire repaid so magnificently by the line,—

"It is from the North that enlightenment now comes to us."

Voltaire urged Diderot to accept Catharine's propositions. He refused through fidelity to the publishers, who, meanwhile, betrayed him by mutilating his articles without his knowledge, in order to render them less offensive. The work was finally completed in a passable manner in 1765; but the clergy condemned it in their assembly of August, 1765, and denounced the secret distribution of the copies. The government ordered the subscribers to deliver up to the police the copies which had been addressed to them only with its permission, and which were afterwards restored to them in part, after absurd incidents.[1] It was impossible to show less dignity and determination than was done by this deplorable government.

Some supplements were added to the body of the work; but when, in 1769, an attempt was made to reprint the whole, the parliament interdicted it. Editions, by way of compensation, multiplied abroad, and all literary Europe was enabled to contemplate more or less freely the Babel built by the French philosophers.

It was a Babel indeed, but constructed of many precious materials. There was something more than an impious pride in this kind of apotheosis of the human mind. There was the sincere love of humanity, that terrestrial religion which survives the religion of the ideal and the eternal, and permits us to hope for its return, so long as it is not itself stifled beneath selfish scepticism and practical materialism. The authors had foreseen and hoped that their work would be outstripped by the progress of the sciences. The circle of knowledge extending indefinitely, it may be said that an encyclopædia should be rewritten from century to century: there is no reason, therefore, to reproach that of the eighteenth century for being incomplete. The spirit of negative criticism which prevails in a great part of the articles, and the lack of moral unity in the whole, are better founded reproaches.

It was not in a publication in some sort official, like the *Encyclopædia*, that the innovators could express their full thought. The works which Diderot published anonymously, or circulated in manuscript, are of great importance in this respect. Such was *The Interpretation of Nature* (anonymous, 1754). He comments

[1] See Voltaire; *Mélanges*, and the *Avertissement* prefixed to t. XIII. of the *Œuvres de Diderot*.

Digitized by Google

upon and appropriates therein the most daring ideas of Buffon, Maupertuis, and the great vitalistic physician, Bordeu, while strengthening by his own lucubrations every thing that pertains to naturalistic Pantheism. To do away with the necessity of the universal motive power, he supposes, like the ancient atomists, their imaginary molecule, active through itself, and having always acted; and does not trouble himself to explain the coming of the first impulse, essential, without a will, and without a determining cause: but, at the same time, he abandons the atomists, like all the other metaphysicians, on that homogeneousness of matter which ends, in Pantheism, in the unity of substance and being. He claims, on the contrary, that matter is diversified infinitely, — no longer merely in phenomena, but in substance. Nature is nothing to him but the combination of different kinds of heterogeneous matter. He thus attains, far beyond Buffon, the opposite pole to Spinozism, seeing nothing but diversity, and absolutely losing sight of unity:[1] the God-Nature disappears after the intelligent and free God; but he recalls it by the strangest conception that ever entered the imagination of a philosopher. Maupertuis was not content with attributing sentiment (desire, aversion, memory, and intelligence) to all the molecules, even in the inorganic state: in the animal, he made each molecule lose self-consciousness, in order to form from all the consciousness of the molecules confounded, the consciousness of the whole. Diderot adopts this incomprehensible idea,[2] and insinuates, while seeming to protest against the consequence that may be deduced from it, that the aggregate collection of the molecules, or the universe, has an aggregate consciousness, and that the world is God. It is the final solution of naturalism; and this solution is itself the most obscure of all enigmas. Consciousness and individuality being

[1] Buffon admitted between the inorganic molecule and the organic and sensible molecule only a difference of degree, a distance that may be surmounted. Diderot believes all the molecules sensible, and at the same time, by an astonishing contradiction, affirms that animality has had, from all eternity, its separate elements diffused through the mass of matter.

[2] He develops it later in his strange *Rêve de d'Alembert*, and pretends that atoms, in forming an organized body, not only associate, but become blended together. To blend is to mix the parts: simple beings, being necessarily impenetrable to each other, could not blend together. If the pretended atoms have parts, they are not atoms, that is to say, *indivisible;* they are nothing but *corpuscules*, aggregates indefinitely divisible; they are not real beings. This idea is the negation of all distinct existence, and ends, after having denied God and the soul, in even denying the atoms; so that nothing is left but an inconceivable mixture of combined nothingness.

Digitized by Google

only the same thing, what can be the signification of a collective or aggregate consciousness?

Many flashes of light gleam, however, through this darkness. The idea that all the phenomena of gravity or attraction, elasticity, magnetism, and electricity, may one day be reduced to the same principle, impresses the mind by its greatness, at the same time that it tacitly contradicts the pretended multiplicity of substances. Another idea, which Diderot borrows from Bordeu, namely, that each organ is in some sort a distinct animal, merits serious attention. The old error of the sensitive soul, swept away by Descartes, enveloped a truth, the veil of which had been lifted by Paracelsus and Van Helmont, with their *archeii*, or local or organic souls. If spiritualism is right in placing in the soul every sensation, every impression of which the *ego* is conscious, is naturalism, or rather vitalism, wrong in saying that sensibility exists everywhere in the organized being, and that the organs have a life of their own, although surbordinate to the central life, and probably secondary centres, of which the *ego* is not conscious?

This singular book terminates in the manuscript by a kind of invocation more singular than all the rest, — an invocation to the great *Perhaps:* —

"O God! I know not whether thou art: but I will think as if thou lookedst into my soul; I will act as if I were before thee!"

This *perhaps* is the true final conclusion of Diderot, beyond naturalistic dogmatism. Playing like an artist, like a child, with those terrible weapons which shook the world, he never had an absolute conviction, a fanatical love, of the doctrines which heated his imagination; and the comparative date of his works shows us flashes of Deism in the height of the materialistic and atheistic propaganda. He paused, to set his conscience at ease, at the paradox, that opinions on this matter are indifferent to the conduct of life.

Moreover, there was to him no *conduct of life*, to speak truly, since there was no free will. "There is no virtue and vice," he says in a familiar letter,[1] "but only native beneficence or malevolence." We see the value of the word "virtue" from his lips, which he repeats unceasingly with such sincere enthusiasm. It is only the taste for and activity in good, without effort, merit, or choice. He admires a virtuous man as a fine production of Nature.

To be just to Diderot, we must see in him, not a man of method

[1] Inserted in the *Correspondance* of Grimm, 1756.

Digitized by Google

and logic, but a man of spontaneity and passion, a mind and heart whose perpetual youth were to remain fresh till his last day, an ever-gushing wit at the service of every idea and every man that claimed the aid of his time and pen. His private passions aside, he devoted, of the rest of his life, a part to writing his own books, and the other and greater part to writing the books and transacting the business of friends, indifferent persons, and the world in general: metaphysics or ethics, physics or mathematics, licentious novels or moral tales, fancies of every kind, plays, literary criticism, or criticism of the fine arts, every thing was good to the *pantophile* Diderot, as Voltaire so truly styles him. For instance, between the *Encyclopædia* and the *Interpretation of Nature*, he dreamed of dramatic glory: he wished to enrich the French stage with a new kind or rather different shades of intermediate drama between tragedy and comedy; namely, the serious comedy, the bourgeois tragedy, and the moral and philosophical drama. His propositions were sustained by plausible reasons, without exaggeration or declamation; and he took care not to insult our national masterpieces, like ridiculous imitators, the Le Tourneurs and Merciers, after him: Can comedy teach virtue, instead of merely making war on vice? Can tragedy extend to private misfortunes? In other terms, can the stage embrace human life under all its aspects? There is herein at the bottom the sentiment of a democratic art and drama; but the answer to these propositions should perhaps be in the affirmative, only with a reservation: Yes, the stage may embrace human life under all its aspects, but provided that dramatic poetry remains poetry; that it maintains itself at the elevation of ideal truth, and does not sink to the prosaicalness of a confused and undigested reality.

The *tearful* comedy of La Chaussée was already in the direction indicated by Diderot; but dramatic force and elevation of views were lacking. Diderot undertook to set the example. He failed (1757–1758). He, so warm, so piquant, so highly colored, so alluring in fancy, in criticism, and in miscellanies, and so touching and simple at times in anecdote, was not recognizable in the drama: his pathos turned to bombast, his morality to pedantry, and his simplicity to puerility. A few years after, another profited by his lessons better than himself, and partially realized what Diderot had conceived: this was Sedaine, that unlettered artisan whom Nature had made a dramatic writer, and who took possession of the stage in spite of all obstacles. The enthusiastic welcome given by Diderot to *The Philosopher without Knowing*

Digitized by Google

it (1765) was perhaps the trait of his life which did him the most honor, and the least contestable proof of his excellent natural disposition.

New sources of interest were thus opened to the stage at the moment when the change in manners and ideas was cooling the enthusiasm of the public for our great drama of the seventeenth century: ere long, the imitations of Shakspeare by Ducis,[1] and the translation of the works of this mighty genius, unfaithful and distorted as they were, gave an impulse to these tendencies, which Voltaire strove to arrest, by reacting, in the name of the national taste and spirit, against the foreign importations of which he had been the first promoter. The consequences of this literary revolution, which was suspended by a revulsion towards what was termed the *classic*, that is, towards antiquity more or less rightly understood, and which then resumed its course and pursued its phases to our days, oversteps the limits of our work, and belongs to the history of modern France.

Criticism, whether literary or artistic, was not less indebted to Diderot than the theory of the dramatic art. He made it an art of sentiment and imagination, instead of a cold literary anatomy. He sowed the *Correspondance* of Grimm, the *Salons*, etc., with an infinite wealth of imagery and thought:[2] his sympathetic nature made him invent the *criticism of beauties*,[3] more hazardous, but more fruitful perhaps, than the other. We cannot help admiring the power, fertility, variety, and perpetual and universal emotion, of this perpetually throbbing soul; yet we are dazzled by meteors revolving through a stormy sky, rather than lighted and guided by a serene beacon: the reason is that Diderot is pantheistic in art as in philosophy, that his principle is not the ideal, but life under all its forms, without preference, without degrees, and without hierarchy. He makes no distinction in rank between Raphael and Rubens.[4] This testimony, nevertheless, should be rendered him, that, despite the too often cynical license of his language, he does

[1] Dating from 1769.

[2] The periodical exhibitions of the works of the painters and sculptors, the members of the Academy, had commenced in 1757. Diderot wrote, from 1761, a series of *Salons*, three only of which had been published at his death: five others have recently been brought to light by a publisher, eager for the renown of Diderot, — M. Walferdin. — See *Revue de Paris* from August to November, 1857.

[3] Saint-Beuve, art. on Diderot.

[4] Through the universality of his sympathy, he was the first after the Renaissance to begin to comprehend something of Gothic architecture: he had an acute and profound perception of the nature of the effect produced by it.

Digitized by Google

not approve of licentious painting, the profanation of art: his sensuality is that of Nature, and not of the Parc-aux-Cerfs; of Rubens, and not of Boucher.

It would be a very difficult thing to draw with any precision the mobile face of Diderot; to model, so to speak, his immense head, the most encyclopedic of the age, which contained every thing, but which so ill arranged what it contained. The sentiment which shut itself up in finite things; which writhed, swelled, and boiled over for want of knowing how to rise into the boundless spheres for which it was made; unrestrained passion, unregulated activity, and the blind effusion of the heart and the senses, yet an exalted admiration of virtue; a very doubtful taste in personal works, and a lack of moderation and propriety in every thing, yet an often exquisite feeling in the appreciation of the works of others; grandiloquence and sincerity; a naïve veracity, and a readiness to work himself into a passion, like a comedian, over borrowed ideas; an ultra license, and the faculty of comprehending the most delicate shades of all kinds of modesty, — we would never end, should we attempt to assemble all the contrasts of this astonishing character. The love of humanity, the hatred of oppression, the belief in the perfectibility of the human race, clearer and less fluctuating perhaps than in Voltaire, united him to the *patriarch of Ferney:* he was opposed to him in almost every other respect. Voltaire advocated *Reason* (practical and experimental reason); Diderot advocated *Nature*. Diderot was attached through tradition to a few unbelievers of the first half of the seventeenth century, — the Cyranos and the Theophiles. He sprung from these, like Voltaire from Chaulieu and Saint-Évremont; but over their heads he joined hands in a remoter past with something stronger, — with Rabelais and the first generation of the sixteenth century: he was related to Rabelais like Voltaire to Montaigne, but by a closer and more apparent bond.

Whither were we drifting, meanwhile, with guides such as Diderot and his friends? Like almost all innovators, these men, boiling over with life, were much better than their ideas. We behold a contrary and much sadder spectacle at the epochs when the idea of truth, vainly discerned anew by the mind, no longer produces the fruit of goodness in the dulled soul, and when the sentiment of man is below his thought. With the philosophers of the eighteenth century, the heart cast an illusion over their doctrines. But the men disappeared, the ideas remained: whither would they lead? Voltaire unsuccessfully strove to arrest the car launched on a

Digitized by Google

terrible descent: he had not the charmed words needed to stop the frenzied coursers. Diderot himself, who had shown in the *Dream of d'Alembert* and the *Supplement to the Voyage of Bougainville* how far he could go in point of unbounded licentiousness of imagination and materialistic logic, — Diderot was left behind! He defended moral love against Buffon; he defended the general ideas of justice and probity against Helvetius, to whom he had furnished his best pages; he denied that the pleasure of the senses is the only end of man; he refuted the morality of interest in behalf of sentiment.[1] Impotent efforts! What is the partial and abstract idea of justice separated from the universal and living ideal, which is justice as it is all kinds of perfection? What avails the reservation of sentiment, without liberty and immortality? Without free will there is no morality; without personality there is no immortality, no virtue, because there is no sacrifice.[2] By what right can it be demanded of a being who is to be annihilated to-morrow to sacrifice his gratification to the laws of a social order which has no final cause beyond this world?

Should no voice rise powerful enough to recall the human soul to itself, in vain would the confused enthusiasm of naturalism, in vain would the mysterious needs of our moral essence, attempt to delude themselves by giving form to the worship of *Reason and Nature;* in vain would they proceed even to strange revulsions towards the naturalistic theogonies of antiquity, and bring forth sects in which the material appetites would be shrouded in mystic forms. All this would pass away like a shadow: nought would remain standing. Passion, the fire of which could not subsist without the aliment of an ideal, would disappear after it; ideas would become effaced after sentiments; theoretic naturalism itself would sink under the disdain of all theory. Decrepit

[1] In private, at least; for the encyclopedists did not write publicly against each other. Diderot alikes refutes the theory that *to feel is to judge*, of Helvetius. He lays down the distinction between the physical and the moral, "as solid," he says, "as that between the animal that feels and the animal that reasons."— See *Œuvres de Diderot*, t. III. p. 251; the admirable and inconsistent Letters to Falconet, and the *Mémoires sur Diderot*, by Naigeon. Voltaire, on the occasion of *L'Esprit*, had protested on his side, with great sense, in favor of free will, in the name of sentiment, — that principle to which Diderot appealed without being willing to draw the legitimate consequences therefrom, and which Voltaire was not accustomed to invoke.

[2] There are generous inconsistencies in this; but they do not authorize the denial of logic. Neither must the spiritualistic Pantheism of the Stoics or of Spinoza, according to which the *reasoning* soul, the soul of the sage, rejoins its source, the Supreme Being, be raised as an objection. Such a doctrine, weakening without destroying the notion of immortality, destroys nature, and not virtue.

Digitized by Google

society would then strive to return to its infancy. The impotence and apathy of souls would bring back, not the faith in the old traditional rites, but their form: we would have the ancient creeds on the surface, and absolute indifference, the last offspring of scepticism, at the bottom. Practical materialism would reign alone in the void over the ruined moral world. The abuse of the mind would have destroyed the mind.[1]

[1] Nothing is more decisive concerning the impotence of the materialistic philosophy than the confessions which escaped Voltaire and Diderot. "Hell is good for the rabble, great and small," exclaimed Voltaire in one of his sallies. Diderot, in his *Projet d'instruction publique pour la Russie*, admits that Atheism, which is fitted for a small number of thinkers, could not suit a community. What is the logical conclusion of this, if not esotericism and official hypocrisy?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (CONTINUED.)

ROUSSEAU. — Spiritualism revived through Sentiment. Religious and Democratic Philosophy. Origin and Youth of Rousseau. *Dissertation on the Sciences. Dissertation on Inequality. Essay on the Origin of Languages. The New Héloïse.* ÉMILE. THE SAVOYARD VICAR. SOCIAL CONTRACT. *Letters from the Mountain.*

1749–1767.

ON the shore of the largest lake, at the foot of the highest mountains, of Europe, rises, surrounded with the most admirable spectacles of Nature, a city whose historic character since the Reformation has borne no proportion to the narrowness of its extent and the smallness of its population, — Geneva, that republican colony of French Protestantism, founded by the first emigration of the sixteenth century, under the auspices of an intolerant and harsh but energetic and persevering genius; then enlarged and transformed by the second emigration of the seventeenth century, under the more humane influence of the spirit of investigation and the liberty of conscience. A great moral, intellectual, and material growth had coincided at Geneva with the decline of the old Calvinistic fanaticism. This city of twenty thousand souls already contained a multitude of men, no longer distinguished only as formerly in theology and preaching, but in letters, sciences, and the higher branches of trade. Among these men, the precursors of much more brilliant generations, it is sufficient to cite Abauzit of Languedoc, the true type of a religious philosopher and free-thinker, who preserved the genuine Christian spirit. Science and liberty at Geneva did not reject religious sentiment at the same time with fanaticism: Protestantism did not feel the need of passing through infidelity to end in philosophy.

June 28, 1712, a child was born at Geneva, of a clockmaker of French extraction, and the daughter of a minister of the gospel. The father was a skilful, cultivated, ardent, and intelligent artisan, but with little order in mind or conduct: the mother, a charming woman, of artistic tastes, refined mind, and tender heart, died in giving birth to the child. JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU was

Digitized by Google

born with irritable nerves and delicate organs, in which were lurking the germs of diseases destined to torture his physical life almost as much as his moral life. His precocious sensibility should have been restrained by the cultivation of practical reason: it was over-excited by an ill-directed education, which abandoned him defenceless to his imagination, and did not teach him to conquer dominion over himself. At six years of age, absorbed by the reading of romances, he had already acquired the habit of living in an imaginary world which he never completely quitted, and which was destined to make reality so harsh and repulsive to him, but also to contribute to preserve him from theoretical and practical materialism. "I had no idea of things themselves," he says, "while the whole round of sentiments was already known to me. I had apprehended nothing; I had felt every thing" (*Confessions*, liv. i.). With admirable natural sense, moreover, he never acquired, in intercourse with life, the feeling of the just relation of practical things, their positive and respective value.

History succeeded romances, — Plutarch, the Urfés, Scudéris, and La Calprenèdes. There was the same identification with the heroes of antiquity as with those of romance. In this strange child, these were not past events which belonged to the memory, but present facts which transpired in the soul. One day, as he was recounting at table the adventure of Scævola, the listeners were terrified at seeing him rise, and hold his hand over a burning chafing-dish to represent the act of his hero.

Two great currents coming, the one from the Middle Ages, through the romances of the seventeenth century, the other from Rome and Sparta, two idealities which seem opposite, but which may harmonize, to a certain degree, chivalric love and political virtue, blended, therefore, to form his soul. Voltaire had been the pupil of Bayle and Ninon: Rousseau was indirectly the pupil of Petrarch, and directly that of Lycurgus and Phocion. Other elements combined with these. The Genevese Protestant tradition, enlightened by free investigation and liberated from narrow sectarian spirit, confirmed, by religious sanction, the republican maxims of the great men of Plutarch, and kept the child in the surroundings the least remote from antique liberty which this age could offer. The love of the fields, of silence, and of solitude, another resemblance to the ancients, already announced that love of Nature; which would be in him, not a theory or a science, as in others, but the very source of inspiration, and the refuge of the soul.

Digitized by Google

But the equilibrium was already destroyed in this beautiful moral organization. The premature development of the sensibility had weakened the elasticity of the soul, as a too rapid growth weakens the body. The imagination was irresistibly powerful, the feeling profound, and the intellect extended and quick; but the will was weak, the character bent beneath the weight of the ideas and passions, and was to be strengthened one day only by a regeneration of the will, purchased at the price of mortal anguish.

Already in the childish love of this being, who was still ignorant of himself, was manifested that tenderness mingled with sensuality which was to be the torment of his whole existence. Ere long, adolescence brought him in contact with the first angles of harsh reality: the rival of Artamenes and Scævola was apprenticed to a vulgar trade. He soon became debased therein. His nature, yielding to every impression, readily suffered itself to be modified by the atmosphere which surrounded it. This idealistic, tender, and proud child contracted petty vices of dissimulation, false shame, and servile habits. The passion for reading, which remained to him from his better days, saved him from great vices and bad morals.

It is known how the apprenticeship terminated by a flight to Savoy, and how his escape threw him under the patronage of that singular woman who exercised so much influence over his destiny, — Madame de Warens. He changed his religion at Turin, already quite capable, at sixteen, of feeling the odiousness of apostasy, since he did not change through conviction, but because he was too feeble in will to escape by an energetic effort the false position in which he had thoughtlessly placed himself. He fell into domestic service. He seemed drifting to destruction. Every one knows the anecdote of the ribbon, — a childish freak, which ended, through the delirium of bashfulness, in a real crime, the remorse of his whole life, expiated by an heroic confession.

Providence sent him a helping hand which arrested him on the brink of the abyss, — that poor, dismissed curate, that Abbé Gaime, who planted the germs of religious philosophy by the side of the romantic and republican principles in his troubled, misled, but not perverted soul: the great man was one day to pay the debt of the child by immortalizing his benefactor. The Abbé Gaime was to become the *Savoyard Vicar*.

Returning from Turin to Savoy with a new heart, so to speak, he was led by his restless temper from Annecy to Lyons, to Switzerland, and to Paris, showing himself devoid of aptitude for regu-

Digitized by Google

lar and practised careers, and becoming successively infatuated with the most varied objects; a compound of an adventurer,[1] a projector, a child, and a dreamer, but the dreamer always prevailing. To wander, leaving free scope to his reveries, through a wild and picturesque country, was to him supreme happiness. Poverty scarcely troubled him: he forgot the hunger of yesterday, and did not think on that of the morrow. How many unknown poems gushed from his soul, and were wafted away beyond recall by the winds of the Alps with the clouds of heaven! what torrents of imagination and of passion, which suffer only a few distant echoes to reach us through the thickets of Clarens and the rocks of Meillerie!

It was on viewing the condition of the French peasant more closely in his vagrant peregrinations, and comparing it with the comfort of the Swiss,[2] that the first germ of hatred of the oppressors of the people, and of the unjust political and fiscal system that weighed upon France, entered his heart. The ideal love of antique liberty thus began to take root on earth. At the same time with pity for our peasants, an ardent sympathy was awakened in him for France, for the nation in general, — a sympathy which would always live in the depths of his soul, even when he treated us most harshly in his writings. Our literature was the foundation of what was a passion in him, and an ardent inclination throughout Europe, where the love of French literature counterbalanced the bad effect of the manners of the French: Europe hated the French when it saw them, and loved them when it read them. Jean-Jacques, for his part, would always love those whom he styled "the truest of all nations, altogether light and forgetful as it was,"[3] and suffer more than themselves from their military reverses. He who was the most truly French at heart among our philosophers, he who would combat the dissolvant effects of the cosmopolitanism preached by his fellows, and rekindle the

[1] An *adventurer* who contracted no debts, and duped no one but himself, it must not be forgotten.

[2] See, in liv. iv. of the *Confessions*, the anecdote of the peasant in easy circumstances who affected destitution, concealing his wine on account of the excise-duties, his white bread on account of the villain-taxes, and deeming himself lost if it was suspected that he was not dying of hunger.

[3] "I do not perceive any more virtues among the French than among other nations; but they have preserved a precious relic of their love. We must never despair of a people that still loves what is just and honest, although it no longer practises it. . . . It is still necessary to deceive them to render them unjust; a precaution of which I have not seen much need among other nations." — *Correspondance*, 1770: Letter to M. de Belloi.

Digitized by Google

feeling of the country, the foster-father of that generation which was to save our nationality, was a foreigner by birth!

He had returned anew to Chambery, where he led that strange existence, so well known, between Madame de Warens and Claude Anet. This woman, endowed with every virtue but that which is the essential characteristic of her sex, exercised an ascendency over Rousseau which was advantageous to him in many respects, but which weakened his moral delicacy as regarded love, and clouded his ideal, without, however, succeeding in converting him to the deplorable system which she had inculcated on herself. This was the origin of many of the inconsistencies in the life of Rousseau.

Such a position could not satisfy him. His soul revolted against it, and preyed upon itself. He fell ill. His organization, greatly shaken, gave birth to those thoughts of a premature end which so long beset him, and turned his mind to religious ideas. Madame de Warens prevented him from succumbing to the terrors of Jansenism, which had seized him for a moment. She preached to him a Catholicism after her fashion, in which purgatory took the place of hell. He plunged into philosophy and the sciences, and wearied himself in vain in attempting to reconcile the modern metaphysicians; then fell back upon his old friend Plutarch and upon Montaigne. Montaigne, so terrible to Pascal, was to Rousseau a well-beloved, if not always salutary, foster-father. Different souls can draw the most diverse oracles from this Proteus as varied as Nature herself.

We need not retrace the sudden changes, in the sequel of which, refusing to enter again into a position intolerable to his dignity and heart, but preserving a profound gratitude where love could not exist, he quitted Savoy irrevocably, and took for the second time the road to Paris in order to make a fortune in behalf of Madame de Warens. His means of making a fortune (he had already invented many!) was a method of noting music by figures. His decisive vocation was, he believed, that of musician (1741).

The method did not succeed; but it procured him some acquaintances in the Parisian world. He attempted another adventure, and set out for Venice as secretary of the French ambassador. He acquitted himself in his diplomatic functions much better than would have been believed; but the brutality of the ambassador, a great nobleman as vapid as incapable, suddenly closed the career to him. His return to Paris marks a fatal date in his life (1745), the epoch of his connection with Thérèse Levasseur, — an unhappy

Digitized by Google

union between the ideal and vulgar reality, which, by an inevitable reaction, absolutely separated the life of the soul and the imagination in Rousseau from the external life, instead of seeking to harmonize them. Poverty came to render heavier the deplorable yoke that he had taken upon himself. The contrast became more and more poignant between the man conscious of his own value and the position given him by society. Proud and timid, he ill understood how to succeed. His best years were vainly wasted; his attempted operas did not reach the stage; and, to avoid dying of hunger at thirty-five, he was forced to become the secretary of the wife and son of a farmer-general. From this time dated the so-much stigmatized faults which were to burden the rest of his career, and to leave a shadow on his name in the future. Two children, born of his intimacy with Thérèse, were sent to the Foundling Hospital (1747–1748). Poverty impelled him to this step: he was surrounded by the examples of a corrupt community: to people the *Enfants-Trouvés* appeared a very natural thing around him; and having nothing but sentiments and tendencies, without fixed principles, he was carried away by the spirit of imitation.

The time of faults was closely followed by that of glory. Rousseau had not thought, hitherto, of seeking subsistence or reputation in literature: he did not believe himself possessed of the necessary knowledge or facility, and attached no importance to a few verses, a few youthful attempts. Nevertheless, intimate with almost all the men of letters, he attached himself especially to Diderot with the vehemence that he threw into every thing, and undertook, at his request, the musical articles of the *Encyclopædia*. Meanwhile Diderot was imprisoned in the donjon of Vincennes, on account of his *Letter on the Blind*.

The decisive moment had come which was about to reveal Rousseau to himself and the world.

He went and came unceasingly between Vincennes and Paris, his brain heated by the persecution of his friend, which revived all his own sufferings. A smothered fermentation agitated him: his mind floated in a chaos full of germs and rays which demanded form and life. One day, as he was reading the literary journal, the *Mercure de France*, while walking along, his eyes fell on a prize question proposed by a provincial literary society,— the Academy of Dijon,—

Has the revival of the arts and sciences contributed to purify morals?

Digitized by Google

A flash of light illumined his brain: a whole world of ideas overflowed and assailed him with such impetuosity, that he fell at the foot of a tree in a kind of trance. He lived an age in half an hour. All his sympathies with Nature, with simple manners, with an independent and solitary life; all his sufferings, all his grievances, all his vague irritation against a scholarly, elegant, fastidious, and depraved community, refined in mind and unfeeling at heart, which analyzed every thing without feeling any thing; which disregarded the mysteries of the soul while attempting to reduce every thing to observation and experiment; which, by force of giving decent names to its vices, had learned no longer to blush at them; which stifled natural superiority under absurd and disgraceful conventional superiority; which founded the enjoyment and knowledge of the few on the wretchedness and ignorance of the many; against a community, in fine, perfected and flourishing without, but undermined within, like those trees, hollow to the core, which conceal their impending destruction beneath foliage and flowers, — all took form, all arranged itself in order: the inspiration gushed forth; it was to gush forth uninterruptedly, like a fiery torrent, for twelve years.[1]

[1] *Confessions*, l. viii.; *Seconde Lettre à M. de Malesherbes; Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques, second Dialogue.* A previous question must be decided here. A grave accusation has been brought against Rousseau. Morellet, Marmontel, La Harpe, and Madame de Vandeul, have repeated in every key, according to the assertion of Diderot, that Rousseau resolved the question in the negative only by the advice of Diderot, and contrary to his first impression. Were this fact true, the story of Jean-Jacques would be a romance, his theory a prolonged play of wit, and his life itself a calculated and dramatized paradox. There are examples of famous authors who have changed their initial argument through calculation of effect, through artistic choice, and have obtained a species of literary and conventional faith in their thesis: but these authors have painted only with their imagination, and have drawn every thing from their brain; the man and the writer have been separate in them. In Rousseau, the man and the writer were absolutely identified; he wrote, like Pascal, *with his heart's blood;* and, as he said himself a hundred times, he was a writer only when the inspiration of his soul forced him to write: without inspiration, he wrote only like a common rhetorician, or rather he did not write, he could not write. It was absolutely the same in his private relations, his most familiar correspondence, as in his great works, and more than one proof anterior to his first writings attests the tendencies which led him to the point which he reached; for instance, a letter of 1748 (*Histoire de Rousseau*, by Musset-Pathay, t. II. p. 363). Moreover, doubt is impossible to any one that has been touched in the slightest degree by the moral anguish which Rousseau expresses so powerfully: there is an accent therein which cannot be mistaken by the man who has passed through internal trials. Rhetoricians and sophists have not the secret of such language.

It is probable, that, if Rousseau preserved some scruples and hesitation, Diderot, with his natural love of paradox, did not fail to combat them, and to do his best to render the solution as excessive and absolute as possible. Rousseau admits that Diderot put a few touches to his first works, and exaggerated the coloring. The heedlessness

Digitized by Google

The Academy of Dijon had designed to propound the problem only with respect to the *revival* of the sciences in the modern era. Rousseau did not confine himself within these historic limits: it was the *establishment* itself of enlightenment among the human race which he considered, which he judged, and which he condemned.

"Our souls are corrupted in proportion as our arts and sciences advance towards perfection. This is a general law. Luxury, dissoluteness, and slavery have been in all times the punishment of our proud efforts to emerge from the blissful ignorance in which the Eternal Wisdom had placed us. Astronomy was born of superstition, eloquence, and ambition; . . . all the sciences, and morality itself, of human pride. The arts and sciences owe their birth, therefore, to our vices. The cultivation of the sciences enfeebles the martial qualities, and also the moral qualities. Printing, the cause of frightful and constantly increasing disorder in Europe, . . . is the art of rendering eternal the follies of the human mind."

The true meaning of these hyperboles soon breaks forth. "All these abuses proceed from the preference that is accorded to talent over virtue. A dangerous Pyrrhonism is substituted for ignorance. Our literary men go about sapping the foundations of faith and annihilating virtue. They smile at the old-fashioned words country and religion. The frenzy of distinguishing themselves is their only dogma. In our educational institutions, the youth are taught every thing except their duties. The word country never strikes their ear. The ancient politicians talked of morals and virtue: ours talk of nothing but commerce and money."[1]

Then arises a cry of ill-restrained regret for those arts which he has just stigmatized. "The dissoluteness of morals, the con-

of Diderot and his ill humor towards Rousseau after their rupture misled his memory as to the circumstances: the malignity of his friends did the rest.

See, concerning this so often repeated discussion, two admirable, sagacious, and just pages in the excellent chapter that M. Villemain has devoted to Rousseau. — *Tableau du* xviii. *siècle*, t. II. xxiv. leçon. — See also, in this chapter, every thing concerning the formation of the talent of Rousseau.

[1] He regards as contributing to corruption, together with the sciences, "every thing which facilitates communication between different nations, and deteriorates the customs suited to their climate and political constitution. All change in customs tends to the prejudice of morals." — *Ibid.* This is the reaction against cosmopolitanism carried to extremes; but it is to be remarked that this is applicable only to a people at once free and primitive, and consequently cannot concern any of the great European States, all of which have lost their primitive form and manners.

Digitized by Google

sequence of luxury, is corrupting our taste. Woe to the artists who are born in these frivolous and effeminate times! Tell us, celebrated Arouet, how many virile and strong beauties you have sacrificed to our false delicacy?"

After a new digression against the infidel philosophers, he thus concludes: "The true philosophy is to commune with one's self, and to listen to the voice of his conscience in the silence of the passions."

To commune with one's self was the greatest saying that had been uttered during the century. Descartes had recalled the mind to itself: Rousseau recalled the soul thither.

Exaggeration and rhetoric at times marred the expression of an anger so sincere at heart; but the essential characteristic was none the less marked forever, — the rebellion of sentiment against the critical spirit, the reaction of conscience against the abuse of reason, the appeal to primitive simplicity against the refinement of manners. Rousseau had appeared in the arena.

The Dijon prize was won. "The *Dissertation* soars above the clouds," wrote Diderot, who forgave Rousseau his harsh truths for the sake of his paradoxes. Society followed Diderot's example: it applauded the blow that was dealt it; but the greater part believed themselves merely applauding a bold feat of strength. It was the sensation of cloyed souls who delight at times in being rudely awakened.

Several refutations were attempted meanwhile. Jean-Jacques replied to all, warming in the strife, and obstinately clinging to the most daring parts of his thesis, but at the same time manifesting his true aim with increasing energy.

"Science is not made for man in general. It is enough for him to study well his duties, and each one has received all the enlightenment that he needs for this study.

"Science is made," he had already said, "only for a few privileged geniuses, who should be placed at the head of society by the rulers.

"Man is made to think and to act, and not to reflect.

"We always think that we have said what the sciences have done when we have said what they should do. The study of the universe should exalt man to his Creator: it exalts nothing but human vanity." A fierce attack follows against ancient and modern philosophy, *the offspring of human pride*, which he seems to accuse in a body of atheistic esotericism. He softens this vehemence farther on by showing that *false* philosophers have suc-

Digitized by Google

ceeded *true* ones. "The first taught duty and virtue: the latter distinguish themselves only by marking out contrary paths." [1]

It might have been imagined hitherto that a powerful auxiliary had come to the support of the established religion; but he attacks theology with the same weapons as philosophy.

"The scholastic substitutes scientific pride for Christian humility, and degrades the sublime simplicity of the gospel. The gospel is the only book necessary to a Christian, and the most useful of all even to him who is not such.

"It is true that the philosophy of the soul leads to true glory; but this is not learned in books.

"Rational ignorance . . . is that which renders us indifferent to every thing which does not contribute to render man better."

While admitting that ignorant nations may none the less be vicious, he greatly extols the primitive nations. "Through the obscurity of time, we discern among many of them very great virtues, especially a great abhorrence of debauchery, the fruitful mother of all other vices. Man and woman are made to love and to conjugate; but, beyond this legitimate union, all commerce of love between them is a frightful source of disorder in society and morals. Women alone can revive honor and probity among us; but they disdain from the hands of virtue an empire which they wish to owe only to their charms: therefore they do nothing but harm." [2]

This is the morality of Rousseau clearly defined. Its tone bears little resemblance to that of Voltaire.

The following is still more unlike the author of the *Worldling*: —

"Luxury may be necessary to give bread to the poor; but, if there were no luxury, there would be no poor. Every thing above physical necessities is a source of evil. To multiply one's wants is to place his soul in greater dependence."

After premises so rigorous, his conclusions, however, are by no means those of an enthusiast or a Utopian: —

[1] In his attacks on philosophy, he makes reservations in favor of an *illustrious philosopher*, in whom we recognize Montesquieu. He always preserved this inclination for the author of the *Spirit of Laws*, whose idea he had thoroughly fathomed, and whom he never regarded as an adversary. He was also conciliatory towards the historian of Nature, — Buffon.

[2] "This ascendency of women is not an evil in itself," he had said in his *Discours*; "it is a gift bestowed on them by Nature for the happiness of the human race: better directed, it might produce as much good as it does harm at the present time. Men will always be whatever women please."

Digitized by Google

"Are we to reduce men to-day to simple necessities? No more than to burn the libraries. We should only plunge Europe anew into barbarism, and morals would gain nothing thereby. . . . In vain would you restore men to that first equality, the preserver of innocence and the source of all virtue: their hearts, once tainted, will be so forever. There is no longer a remedy, *unless through some great revolution, almost as much to be feared as the evil that it might cure, and which it is blamable to desire, and impossible to foresee.* Let us leave the arts and sciences, therefore, to soften, in some sort, the ferocity of the men whom they have corrupted."

We remark, lastly, in one of his replies, an axiom which he afterwards greatly elaborated: —

"*Man is naturally good.* Before those frightful words 'thine' and 'mine' were invented, before there were masters and slaves, before there were men abominable enough to dare to possess superfluities while other men were dying of hunger, — in what could have consisted those vices, those crimes, with which the human race is so noisily reproached?"[1]

In 1753, the Academy of Dijon proposed a new question, much more searching than the first: —

What is the origin of inequality among men? Is it authorized by the law of Nature?

Rousseau buried himself for a week in the forest of Saint-Germain, meditating, reviving the past ages, and discovering by the power of his imagination the primitive forest in the royal park whose old oaks sheltered his reveries. He came forth armed with his second *Dissertation.*

He had first attacked the mind, intellectual progress: he was now about to attack wealth, material progress, social economy. He even opened the *Dissertation on Inequality* by something far more excessive, and seemed to condemn all society. He began by showing the primitive man, the savage, full of strength, address, and courage, living alone, his heart at peace and his body in health, without either vices or moral virtues, since he was acquainted neither with duty nor justice, but having as his *natural virtue* that innate pity towards his fellows which is remarked even among animals, and which was much more imperious in the

[1] *Réponse à M. Bordes.* — See also *Lettre à M. l'abbé Rainal; Lettre à M. Grimm; Réponse au roi de Pologne; Lettre sur une nouvelle réfutation,* etc.; *Préface de la comédie de Narcisse,* 1751–1753.

Digitized by Google

state of nature than the *state of reason*.[1] Love itself scarcely troubled his peace, happy as he was "in being ignorant of the ravages of the imagination, and the preferences which constitute the moral part of love, — a *factitious* sentiment born of the usages of society."

He repeats on this subject, with passionate bitterness, the strange principles geometrically laid down by the calm Buffon.

"In short, the savage state was the immobility of the species, without either education or progress; that is to say, the animal state. Animal life," he had said before in his letter to M. Bordes, "is not the worst condition for man: it is better to resemble a sheep than a fallen angel."

Man, however, even in the animal state, was distinguished from the animals by two specific qualities, — free activity,[2] and perfectibility. "It would be deplorable for us to be forced to admit that this almost unlimited faculty is the source of all the misfortunes of man. If Nature has designed us to be healthy, I almost dare affirm that the state of reflection is an unnatural state, and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal. The first man that made himself clothing or a lodging thus gave himself unnecessary things, since he had hitherto dispensed with them. In becoming social and a slave, man became weak, wicked, timorous, and cringing."

Setting out from the idea that intercourse between men was not *necessary*, and that perfectibility needed, in order to develop itself, the fortuitous coöperation of several foreign causes which could never have arisen, he judges the problem of the origin of languages insoluble.

"Having proved that inequality was scarcely perceptible in the state of nature, it remains for me to show its origin and progress in the successive development of the human mind. It remains for me to consider the different chances which may have improved the human reason while deteriorating the species,

[1] In his preface, he founds natural right on two principles anterior to reason, — self-love, and sympathy for one's fellows. Natural right extends in a certain measure to animals, as pertaining in some sort to our nature through the sensibility with which they are endowed.

[2] The man that lived the animal life could only virtually possess this liberty, and could not have the reflective consciousness of it: he would have, in point of fact, only spontaneity, and not moral liberty; having no general ideas to which to refer his actions.

Digitized by Google

and, from so remote a limit, brought man and the world at length to the point where we now see them."

This conjectural history of civilization and inequality is the subject of the second part of the *Dissertation*.

"The first man, that, having enclosed a piece of ground, took it into his head to say, '*This is mine*,' and found men simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. How many crimes and how much wretchedness would have been spared the human race, had some one, picking up his spade and filling in the ditch, exclaimed to his fellows, 'Beware of listening to this impostor: you are lost if you forget that the earth belongs to no one, and its fruits to all!'"[1]

This celebrated saying against property has many times been echoed in the formidable conflicts in which the fundamental principles of human association have been disputed in our days. It suffices to remark here that the spirit which dictated it, being a retrospective regret for savage independence, has nothing in common with the theories which attack property in the point of view of an organized community.

Rousseau, at the moment when this was written, acknowledges that it had probably become impossible for things to continue as they were; his idea of property, the farthest limit of the state of nature, depending much on the prior ideas and progress.

He next passes this progress in review, and describes the transition from the savage state to the state of barbarous peoples; the formation of the family, then of the tribe; love, jealousy, self-love, or the idea of consideration and distinction, with its consequences, civility and the point of honor, transforming men elevated to the moral sense by the multiplicity of their relations. He begins to correct in some degree the excess of his thesis: it is no longer animal life, but tribe life, the life of the hunters and the shepherds, that is the true youth of the world, the happiest and most lasting epoch, despite the cruelties and acts of revenge with which it was stained, and which had already weakened man's sympathy for his fellow, the *natural virtue* of the savage. He now approves of the first arts and manufactures, those which only de-

[1] Compare, with Pascal, Havet edit. 1852, pp. liii, 94; Boileau, *Satire* xi., lines 143–173; Fénelon, Utopia of Bœotia, *Télémaque*, liv. vii.; Diderot against the *meum* and *tuum*, *Encyclopédie*, art. *Bacchionites*; Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Address of Don Quixote to the goatherds, Viardot translation; *Id.* of M. Furne, 1858. Cervantes opens the attack.

Digitized by Google

manded the hand of a single man or a single family. "Men then lived free, healthy, good, and happy, as far as it was possible to be by their nature." Evil commenced as soon as one man made other men labor for him, charging himself with their support. "Equality disappeared; property was introduced; slavery and wretchedness germinated and grew with the harvests. Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts, the invention of which produced this great revolution. . . . Iron and grain civilized men and destroyed the human race."

Cultivation brought about the partition of lands: manual labor gave birth to property; property, in its turn, produced the first laws. The inequality increased, but also the reaction of the poor against the usurpation of the rich: the right of the strongest unceasingly disputed the soil with the right of the first occupant. The rich, for their interest, and under the pretext of the interest of all, proposed and procured the acceptance of the establishment of regulations for justice and peace. "Such was or must naturally have been the origin of society and laws, which irrevocably destroyed *natural liberty* (that is, independence), and forever established the law of property and inequality."

The law of Nature had ceased to exist except among the different communities into which the human race was divided, and which contended with each other as individuals had formerly done.

From the primitive laws, he passes to the formation of governments charged with maintaining these laws. He denies, like Montesquieu, that society commenced with absolute government, and that this government, and society itself, derived their origin from paternal authority; the adult son being naturally his father's equal, and owing him only respect, and not obedience. Arbitrary power is not the beginning, but the corruption, the extreme term, of governments: moreover, the date here is unimportant. Arbitrary power, being by its nature *unlawful*, could not in any event have served as the foundation of the *rights of society*, or, consequently, have served to render stable and lawful instituted inequality.

We see, that, while regretting the establishment of the social order, he does not deny its lawfulness, once established. It is important to verify this.

If arbitrary power is unlawful, by much greater reason is slavery. "(Personal) liberty is a gift which we hold from nature in the quality of men. Parents have no right to alienate that of their children to a despot, a master. The jurisconsults who have

Digitized by Google

gravely decreed that the child of a slave is born a slave, have decided, in other terms, that the man is not born a man."

Of the different forms of government, democracy is the best, because it is the least remote from nature. All the magistrates in the different governments were at first elective; then the dissensions caused by the elections induced the people to permit the leaders to become hereditary; then the hereditary leaders transformed their office into a family estate, — a piece of property. Inequality, therefore, has three principal degrees: first, the establishment of law and of legal property; secondly, the institution of the magistracy; thirdly, the transformation of lawful into arbitrary power, supported by standing and mercenary armies. "At this last term of inequality, the circle closes anew. Equality is found again in nothingness. The notions of goodness and justice again vanish. Men return to the law of the strongest, and to a new state of nature, which is the fruit of an excess of corruption. Force maintains the despot; force overthrows him, . . . until new revolutions wholly dissolve the government, or bring it nearer the lawful institution."

After political inequalities, he analyzes civil inequalities, and concludes that wealth is the final distinction among men, "to which all the rest are reduced in the end, — an observation by which we may judge in what proportion each nation has departed from its primitive institution, and of the progress which it has made towards the farthest limit of corruption."

In short, "an immense space separates the natural state from the civil state. The soul and the human passions deteriorate insensibly during this prolonged transformation. The original man vanishing by degrees, society no longer presents any thing but an assemblage of artificial men and factitious passions, which are the work of all these new relations, and which have no real foundation in nature. The savage man lives in himself: the civilized man only knows how to live in the opinion of others."

As in the *Dissertation against the Sciences*, he is less absolute, however, than might be expected in his conclusions. He appears tacitly to admit that civil law is not always and necessarily opposed to natural law. He admits that distributive justice demands that citizens should be distinguished in proportion to their services. Social inequality is contrary, according to him, to natural law, when it does not concur, in the same proportion, with natural inequality. "It is manifestly contrary to the law of

Digitized by Google

nature for a child to command an old man, for an imbecile to direct a sage, and for a handful of men to gorge themselves with superfluities while the famished multitude are lacking the necessaries of life."

So excessive in the beginning, he seems, therefore, reduced finally to the condemnation of hereditary functions and distinctions in the political order, and excessive inequality of fortune in the civil order.

It is necessary to make a distinction in Rousseau between the inspiring sentiment and the positive theme, which is the same in both *Dissertations* under two different aspects; but this is not enough. This theme, so paradoxical, and so offensive not only to our pride, but to our most legitimate aspirations, so harshly negative to that great dogma of progress which is the very foundation of the modern spirit, should not, however, be treated lightly. In the decline of societies, there exists an inevitable tendency in genius to go back to the sources of life, to cling, like Antæus of fable, to the breast of the foster-mother, Earth, to Mother Nature, in order to revive its exhausted strength by contact with her. The great Latin historian urged the *manners of the Germans*, the barbarians, as an example to corrupt Rome: the Greek and Roman philosophers and poets went back still farther, to the Golden Age, the state of innocence. The anathemas against civilization claim a still remoter and more mysterious origin. In the symbols of the creation, the first fall and the first progress are made identical. Man loses his innocence and happiness by tasting the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and neglecting that of the tree of life. By a contrast pointed out by Rousseau,[1] while the Greeks deified the inventor of agriculture, and the inspired singer who built cities by harmony, Moses, rescuing his people from the midst of learned Egypt, showed, in the shepherd Abel, the well-beloved of the Lord, and in the accursed Cain, at once the first homicide, the first agriculturist, and the first founder of cities.[2]

Man, vibrating from one reaction to another, had never hitherto simultaneously embraced the opposite phases of universal truth. Rousseau followed the common law. He protested against all progress, because intellectual progress, separated from moral progress,[3] forgetting its starting-point and the immutable bases

[1] In another book, the *Essai sur l'origine des Langues.*

[2] Zoroaster, on the contrary, represents the art of *sowing corn and wheat in well-tilled ground as the purest act of the law of God.* — *Vendidad*, fargard III. Djemchid, the *tiller of the soil*, is blessed of Ormuz. — *Ibid.* fargard II.

[3] There is some reservation to be made here. The moral progress had not kept pace

Digitized by Google

of things, had come to the point of disregarding the end of its own existence; because man, in fine, had separated from Nature and God.

It was a prophetic warning, a cry of anguish of soul, which could not be transformed into a rational thesis without coming into collision with impossibilities. To condemn all progress in a perfectible being was to wish that the Creator had made a useless work: it was necessarily to go back beyond the tribe state, to which Rousseau was drawn by his imagination, and which was already the result of an infinite progress, to a primitive and absolute state. Rousseau pushed on, therefore, resolutely to animality; but there his reason showed him the essential differences between man and animals, which made it impossible for this state to endure, or for it *ever perhaps to have existed*, as he acknowledges in his preface. What he did not see was that the human animal, had it existed, must have been the most wretched of creatures, precisely because it was the only one perfectible. Nature herself, by not clothing man, and by rendering him weaker, less agile, and less strongly armed, than the larger beasts of prey, providentially forced him to quit Nature, and to develop his slumbering faculties. The savage hunter, as he is known to us, already far removed from this primitive condition, still leads a very precarious life; and Rousseau formed strange illusions, shared also by many of his contemporaries, concerning the prodigious population of the savages and barbarians, — a population, on the contrary, infinitely less than that of civilized communities, for the simple reason that the means of subsistence among them are much more difficult and insecure.

It would be useless to dwell on the historic errors, or the abuses of logic, which Rousseau singularly corrected or lessened in his subsequent works, had not the war which he waged against civilization, science, literature, and the refinements of the mind and manners, interpreted by violent and gross natures and perverted intellects, afterwards furnished pretexts for barbarism, ready to grow out of the very excess of civilization and inequality. Writers did not yet know (and this is an excuse for many rash sayings) what power and responsibility was borne by speech, and that the time was approaching when all words would be transformed into acts. Who knows whether such a proposition concerning the useless-

with the progress of knowledge; society had receded morally in certain respects, but it had advanced in others; the growth of the sentiment of humanity was an incontestable boon of philosophy.

Digitized by Google

ness of the sciences may not have served as an argument or excuse for the judges of Lavoisier?

The same is true with respect to the condemnation of the *meum* and *tuum*, which is in him only a vain regret for a retrospective Utopia. *Mine* is the consequence of *I:* property logically proceeds from personality. Moral evil was born with property and society; nothing is more evident. There would be no moral evil if man had neither intercourse with others, nor knowledge of himself, and if, consequently, there was no morality in human actions: evil was born with good. As soon as a man had tamed or captured an animal, another man could not take his conquest from him without injustice, and the right of property was realized,—a right which must not be confounded with legal or recognized property, as Rousseau says. Rousseau does not make the distinctions here, which should be made, either between the right or the law which is derived from the nature of things and conventional law, or between the right of property in general and of landed property; a separate application of the principle of property, which has commonly been made only by social institution. Personal property was prior to society, and contemporary with humanity itself. Landed property, the basis of our existing Western communities, had its origin in the historic ages. Rousseau says, "*The earth belongs to no one.*" It should be said, the earth belongs to the human race. From the earliest ages of history, the tribes, the nations, had begun to apportion this common domain. Many centuries after, the domains of the nations most advanced in civilization were apportioned in turn among individuals. The appropriation of the soil does not constitute an absolute and unconditional right. The first condition is cultivation: a nomadic nation, which does not cultivate it, acquires no real right to the earth. The second condition, applicable to nations established on the soil, is the acknowledgment, in some sort, of the supremacy of the human race by respect for the laws of humanity and the rights of nations. They owe to strangers free transit, free residence, and free exchange, save the reservations exacted for the security of the State. As the nation that occupies a region of the earth has duties towards the human race, so individuals, landholders, have duties towards the nation and towards the non-landholders. They owe to the nation, the guarantee of their estates, a part of their revenue; and to their fellow-citizens who are not landholders means of labor and sub-

Digitized by Google

sistence, which will indirectly restore to these disinherited ones a part of the common heritage.

This is not the place to touch upon another question raised by Rousseau, — that of the origin of the social compact: its solution was not serious, and he was soon to resume the problem with more calmness and profundity.

There is also a reservation to be made with respect to Rousseau's attacks on the philosophers, his contemporaries.[1] While justly assailing their doctrines, not only is he unjust to their character and intentions, but he sees in them a cause where they are only an effect. Sceptical or materialistic philosophy was the offspring, and not the parent, of licentious selfishness and infidelity, themselves the offspring of bigotry and hypocrisy.

Rousseau may be reproached with exaggeration of language, as of ideas. His style, so full and strong, resonant with a virile harmony which gave a hitherto unknown measure and rhythm to French prose, and the accent of which reminds us of what is related of the Doric mode of his beloved Spartans, — this style, unrivalled, but not always equal to itself, is sometimes studied to stiffness, vehement to declamation, or marred with grandiloquence by the abuse of the apostrophe and the interjection. The somewhat tardy admission into that Parisian society, which was the only and necessary school of good taste; the natural difficulty which he had in writing, for, the opposite of Voltaire in every thing, he experienced great trouble in expressing his superabundant thought; the desire to strike forcibly at any price, after the fashion of the preachers, in order to move the hard heads and enervated souls of his contemporaries; lastly, and above all, perhaps, the influence and example of Diderot, must have been very diverse causes which too often caused him to do violence to his style, and at the same time to exceed his true sentiment. We thus perceive how the most passionate at heart and the most sincerely inspired among the writers of the eighteenth century may have contributed, with Diderot, to bring forth the habits of declamatory rhetoric, dramatic effect, and calculated passion, which were not long in making their way into French literature, and in parodying, so to speak, the new and admirable expression which Rousseau himself had given to all the strong and deep sentiments of our soul. Many of the charming qualities of the French spirit, which were

[1] And to his historical errors to the prejudice of the ancient philosophers.

Digitized by Google

summed up in Voltaire, were wanting in Jean-Jacques; but they were compensated for by other qualities of a superior order: the defects contrary to our national genius, almost imperceptible or gloriously redeemed in the master, overflowed in the pupils.[1]

These defects, a thing still more serious, were destined, after literature, to invade the real life, the political life, which was about to dawn on France. Their consequences were seen in the Revolution. When exaltation and enthusiasm become accepted and and habitual forms, there comes a moment when neither the auditors, nor the political actors themselves, longer know how to distinguish real feeling from conventional hyperbole, or to return to the one while freeing themselves from the other. It is then with civic virtue as formerly with chivalric love. The chill of doubt seizes our hearts; we stagger on the gigantic pedestal upon which we have imprudently elevated ourselves: the critical spirit, lifting its mocking head, calls to us from the depths of the abyss, and we fall back with a terrible rebound into the arms of scepticism and annihilation.

We criticise the traces and echoes of Rousseau thus rigorously, only on account of the immense scope of his words: it will speedily, moreover, be our task to show how far the balance of good and evil was in his favor, in the judgment to be pronounced upon his influence. No sooner had he opened his lips, than, less by his formal propositions than his tone, he restored earnestness to the world, and recalled man, distracted by external things, to himself. Neither the witticisms of the free-thinkers, nor maxims of vague benevolence and indifferent tolerance for vice and virtue, were longer in question here. The *know thyself* of Socrates and Descartes resounded anew. To *discover man*, this second Diogenes, inspired with a purer ideality than the first, would search to the lowest depths, and overthrow mountains.

The *Dissertation on Inequality*, which was not published until 1755, did not have the same renown as its predecessor. The noise, the successful scandal, had been made on the occasion of the *Dissertation against the Sciences*. The astonishment dissipated, it was now necessary to meditate, to judge profoundly: this was too much for the public. The Academy of Dijon was terrified at its own audacity, and dared not crown the author the second time: the government, however, paid little heed to the boldness of Rousseau, who had printed his book in Holland, and was satis-

[1] Not among all: great writers have maintained the noble tradition of Rousseau, from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Madame de Staël to our days.

Digitized by Google

fied with a few reservations concerning the authority of the creation and the divine sanction granted to the ruling powers. The philosophers, less harshly treated than in the first *Dissertation*, were divided. Diderot applauded. Voltaire stood on the reserve, but was dismayed and irritated. He had greeted the attack on the sciences, as an original paradox, by an inoffensive pleasantry (*Timon*); but this time he was obliged to take in earnest this systematic warfare on the refinement of manners, the progress of comfort, and every thing that constituted the charm of life to him. He conceived an aversion to this eloquent barbarian. He was not fitted to judge such things equitably: he very clearly discerned the exaggerations and errors on the surface, and did not take the trouble to scan to the bottom.[1] The opposition between them was thenceforth decided.

Rousseau became more and more defined. From the publication of his first writing, he had resolved to offer the best proof of his sincerity, and to support his speech by his example. He had lived hitherto according to unregulated feeling: he wished thenceforth to live according to virtue, and in the greatest simplicity comporting with the social state.

He examined into his duties. He considered his union with Thérèse as a genuine marriage; but, alas! from the first step in this new path, reason misled him as much as unreflecting imitation had done before. What was he to do with the children born to him? He was poor, and forced to labor: he believed himself threatened with a premature death. He could not bring them up himself; his wife was incapable of it, and her mother unworthy: she would make them adventurers or beggars. It was better for the State to adopt them, and make them mechanics or peasants. He continued, therefore, to send them to the Foundling Hospital, and diverted his thoughts by persuading himself that he was acting like "a member of the Republic of Plato."

Repentance came, as is attested by many touching passages of the *Correspondance* and *Émile;* and the heart, listened to too late, refuted the sophisms of the mind.[2] Rousseau proved by his very

[1] In a reply to Charles Bonnet, who had attacked him under the name of *Philopolis*, Rousseau, however, had just made a great concession. He had acknowledged that "the state of society springs from the nature of the human race, with the aid of external circumstances which may or may not exist, or, at least, *happen sooner or later*. . . . The state of society having an extreme limit to which men have the power of arriving sooner or later, it is not useless to show them the danger of going so fast."

[2] He had three more children, from 1750 to 1755: then he resolved no longer to expose himself to the repetition of these sad abandonments.

Digitized by Google

falls the legitimacy of the reaction which he preached, in the name of feeling, against the abuse of reason.

He might, however, have risen from this poverty, which reduced him to such deplorable extremities. A receiver-general wished to take him as cashier. He undertook it, became perplexed, and fell ill. His natural disposition was as antipathetic to regular cares, to material obligations, and to business, as his principles were incompatible with the avocation of *publican* under the fiscal tyranny which oppressed France. He resigned his office, with every chance of fortune. Neither was he willing to earn a livelihood with his pen; writing was to him a priesthood, and not a trade; to write in order to live would have stifled the independence of his genius: to be himself, and to be useful, he needed to free himself from all interested motives, from all necessity of pleasing, and not to be dependent on success. He became a copyist of music in order to live without depending on any one but the public. It was at this time that he abandoned the sword, gold lace, and superfluities which the world imposed even on the indigence of the artist and the writer, and adopted the simple costume in which he is represented by Delatour. The great portrait-painter of the eighteenth century painted Voltaire and Rousseau in turn at nearly the same age, — about forty. A more touching contrast can scarcely be beheld than these two faces, both admirable, — the one full of external radiance, sparkling animation, and charming and mocking grace; the other of contemplative beauty, melancholy sweetness, and internal fire.

Another graver act attests the conscientiousness which Rousseau designed to introduce into his life. He went to Geneva to abjure, at a mature age, the Roman religion which he had embraced almost in childhood, and resumed the creed of his country (1754). We shall soon see how he intended to reconcile philosophy with what he regarded as the foundation of Christianity.

Rousseau had just won a kind of success that contrasted with his reformation and his new austerity, carried to an affected rudeness, which was nothing but timidity and self-distrust. Become the fashion by his very rupture with the world, he almost brutally repulsed the advances of society in order to avoid again becoming its slave. One of his operas, however, was at length represented, first at court, then in the city (1752–1753). The simple and graceful melodies of the *Devin de Village* were greatly relished at court. This was the occasion for a new sacrifice. Partly through timidity, partly through principle, he excused himself

Digitized by Google

from being presented to the King: he did not refuse the presents (a kind of copyright) usually received by the authors of works represented before the court; but he refused a pension that might fetter his independence.

This was at the beginning of that warfare between French and Italian music which had been raised up by the arrival of the *Bouffes* (Italian theatre) at Paris, and which was to last till the approach of a more formidable conflict, — the eve of the Revolution. The concessions of Rameau to the ultramontane methods had not sufficed; and this master, moreover, was in no wise Italian in genius. Rousseau took sides with words as trenchant and as absolute as those of the *Dissertation against the Sciences*, in his *Letter on French Music* (1753): he claimed that France could have no music, music being nothing but melody, melody depending on the character of the language, and the French language being incompatible with all melody. Our old popular airs, Lulli and his school, and the *Devin* itself indeed, offered contradictions to this thesis, which aroused as much scandal and much more anger than the thesis against society. More glorious contradictions would soon appear. Grétri and Gluck were not far distant.

The paradox of Rousseau was only the questionable application of an ingenious and profound idea: from these discussions, therefore, proceeded a most admirable book, which greatly exceeded the scope of the quarrel, somewhat ill defined in itself, perhaps, by Jean-Jacques,[1] and which formed the link between his musical works and his philosophy, — the *Essay on the Origin of Language and the Source of Melody.*

This double title announced the essential identity of speech and melody in the mind of Jean-Jacques. The fundamental idea of the book went still farther: it was the primitive unity of speech, poetry, music, and the plastic art.

This book also announced the modifications that had been wrought in the mind of Jean-Jacques since he attempted to resolve a problem which he had lately deemed insoluble. Going back for the second time to the cradle of humanity, but with a less irritated and less prejudiced spirit, Jean-Jacques shows man, as soon as he had recognized in other men beings that thought and felt like himself, seized with the desire or the necessity of communicating his thoughts and feelings to them. Man first in-

[1] The point in question, in fact, was a discussion between the music of expression, dramatic declamation, and the music of the imagination and free fancy.

Digitized by Google

vented representative signs, gestures which depicted objects. The language of gesture might have sufficed us had we possessed none but physical wants. It was neither hunger nor thirst, but love, hatred, pity, and anger, that drew the first sounds of the voice from men. The first languages, those of the East, were in no wise methodical or logical: vivid and figurative (figurative sense was born before literal sense), tuneful and passionate, they united all the arts, all the expressions of life, in their principle, the plastic art in gesture, music in speech, poetry in both and in every thing. The first languages were not arbitrary. "The greater part of the radicals therein must have been imitative sounds, either the expression of the passions, or the effect of sensible objects. The words thus had an intrinsic value. The sounds, accent, and measure, which came from nature, were very varied, and left little to be done by the articulations (consonants), which were conventional: men chanted then instead of speaking.

"In proportion as wants increased, as affairs became complicated, and as enlightenment extended, language changed character; it became more precise and less passionate; it substituted ideas for feelings; it spoke no longer to the heart, but to the reason. Through the same cause, accent died out; articulation extended; language became more exact and clearer, but more deliberate, duller, and colder."

The art of writing was the farthest limit of this transformation. "Writing, which seemed destined to give stability to language, was precisely what perverted it; it did not change the words, but the genius; it substituted exactness for expression: we render our feelings when we speak, and our ideas when we write."[2]

There were, therefore, three periods in the formation of language: first, chanted and gestured language; secondly, spoken language; thirdly, written language.

"No language, in which several musical airs may be set to the same words, has a determined musical accent. The languages of modern Europe are all more or less included in this category,

[1] "The discovery of the art of communicating our ideas depends upon a faculty peculiar to man. The animals have, in some sort, a natural language, not acquired and unvarying. Conventional language belongs alone to man. This is why man makes progress both in good and evil, while animals make none." — Compare with the *Grammaire* of Condillac and with Buffon.

[2] "The climates of the North," he says farther on, "brought forth the second kind of language, — that which arises from needs: the first word of this was no longer *love me*, but *aid me*. Our languages are more valuable written than spoken: with the languages of the East it is the contrary."

Digitized by Google

even the Italian. The Italian language is not a musical language in itself any more than the French: the only difference is that the one lends itself to music, and that the other does not do so."

If music is simply the modulation of human speech, it is clear that Rousseau is right. But the question is to know whether music can be a language distinct from speech, sufficient unto itself in the undetermined soaring of the soul towards nature, the ideal, the infinite (symphony), or completing and explaining itself by the indications of gesture and speech in the expression of determined sentiments (dramatic music). The great creations of the musical art reply affirmatively. The arts, including that of speech, could only develop themselves by breaking through the primitive unity of life, — a condition of our weak and imperfect nature, incapable of developing any thing except through decomposition! What an admirable power, however, is that of the writer, who, from the bosom of the obsolete systems of society, thus evokes the spring-time of humanity, and, by a faculty unknown to his age and the preceding one, discovers the most remote sources of the past in the eternal foundation of man! We behold with him the first families vegetating in a purely physical existence in those luxuriant lands of Upper Asia where man can dispense with his fellow; then necessity drawing together the scattered groups in the torrid and arid regions; moral love, poetry, and the languages born of the meeting at the well of the desert simultaneously with the tribe, with society; the full-grown man, finally, taking possession with intoxication of himself and of Nature in that pastoral life in which universal tradition, transmitted from echo to echo to the romances and pictures which travesty it so strangely, has always placed the Golden Age.

It is here that Rousseau fixes his ideal: he continues to anathematize large cities and complicated systems of society; but he no longer regrets, as in the *Dissertation on Inequality*, that we did not stop at the language of gesture, or condemns reflection, which he admits necessary, even to develop the primitive sentiment of sympathy for our fellows.

The part of the book specially upon music contains considerations of the most elevated æsthetics: he triumphantly refutes the materialism which sees in the effects of the fine arts only the physical excitement of our organs. "Sensible objects derive their principal power from the affections of the soul which they represent to us."

The *Essay on the Origin of Language* claims an important

Digitized by Google

place in the history of Rousseau's mind. This admirable work, with the article *Political Economy* written in 1755 for the *Encyclopædia*, marked the transition from the two *Dissertations* to *Émile* and the *Social Contract*. The genius of Rousseau lost its frenzy without losing any thing of its strength or fire. He became temperate and settled in his work. Rousseau did not give to the term *political economy* the special meaning assigned to it by others even at that moment. His article was a treatise on politics, which was to be elaborated and completed in a more decisive work to which we shall speedily recur. We will only remark that the traces of the savage Utopia disappeared in the presence of *practical* and positive questions, and that law and property were fully accepted therein.

At the same time, Rousseau gave a new and definitive sanction to his personal reformation by quitting that Parisian society, away from which it seemed impossible to live as soon as one had tasted its feverish delights. Various motives had decided him, — the extreme difficulty in remaining faithful to his principles in the midst of Paris; his want of success, personally, in society (charming in intimacy, eloquent in monologue and elevated discussion, he was absolutely lacking in the quickness, readiness, and brilliant sallies which gave sovereignty in the drawing-rooms); and lastly, and above all, his profound love of the fields and of Nature. He thought for a moment of returning to his country, but renounced it, partly because he believed himself freer to write in a foreign land than within the reach of the Genevese patricians; partly because he saw Voltaire settle at that moment at Geneva, and foresaw his powerlessness to prevent him from introducing there the manners of Paris. A friend, Madame d'Épinai, offered him a retreat a few leagues from Paris, in a park adjoining the forest of Montmorency (April, 1765). This was that *Hermitage* where he had counted on finding peace, and which was rendered illustrious by the storms of his heart.

The vast labors into which he had plunged, the great philosophical and political works simultaneously pursued, did not suffice to absorb his soul. A new moral modification was wrought within him. The intoxication of virtue, kindled in his brain, had passed into his heart; and he would never contradict himself as to simplicity of manners, and contempt for worldly vanities: but the rude stoicism which he had imposed upon himself was too contrary to his ardent and tender nature; he had still too much youth to endure this effort to the end. The life of Paris had

Digitized by Google

strengthened by irritating him: the life of the fields softened him. He then felt the deep void in a heart which the weak Thérèse could not fill. The power of passion, the exquisite faculties of sentiment which he had received from Nature, turned against him to prove his torment. He bewailed his fate, unable to console himself for not having loved truly a single time, for growing old without having been young, and for dying without having lived.

The *New Héloïse* proceeded from this crisis of tenderness, as the two *Dissertations* had proceeded from the crisis of heroism through which he had passed seven years before. His works were never any thing else than the outbreak of his inner life. To divert his grief, he had called his imagination to his aid, and surrounded himself with ideal creations which he did not dream at first of embodying on earth. By degrees, these sweet shadows took form and life. He seized his pen, and wrote, almost without a plan, the first two parts of his novel; then the shame of contradicting his severe maxims made him seek a moral end. From this came the last parts, or the reign of duty after the reign of passion. It will be comprehended that a work thus composed would not have the unity of conception and execution, the scholarly and logical elaboration, and the irreproachable arrangement of plot, of a *Clarissa*, any more than the variety and propriety of the characters; that it would not be, like the plebeian epic of Richardson, the universal mirror of society: such a work is the mirror only of its author. An actor who should be carried away by his emotion, instead of ruling it, and should wholly identify himself with a single passion and a single character, would not be an actor, but simply a personage; though this personage might indeed be sublime. Such is Rousseau, especially in the first parts. Incapable of the dramatic qualities which cause one to identify himself successively with all the varieties of human nature, he is unequalled in this long colloquy with himself. Despite some alloy of the defects with which he has been reproached, a multitude of the letters of his *Julie* are masterpieces of eloquence, passion, and profundity;[1] and the last parts are signalized by a moral purity, a wisdom of views, and a religious elevation, altogether new in the France of the eighteenth century.

However beautiful is the greater part of the book, as a whole,

[1] The letters of *Saint-Preux* on the morals and the women of Paris, altogether episodical, may be considered as the complement, but a superior complement, of Duclos' *Considérations sur les Mœurs*. Rousseau shows himself therein, not a morose censor, but an observer as equitable as penetrating.

Digitized by Google

in its plot, it is objectionable. Rousseau has not succeeded in connecting the two parts of his work together. Nevertheless, the character of Wolmar, on which the plot hinges, and which feeling and reason alike reject, presents a great interest apart from the action of the book. Rousseau, who lately attacked the infidel philosophers with so much bitterness, appeals here to tolerance and conciliation, when he depicts, face to face with the religious philosophers, the sceptical or even atheistic honest man, by a happy inconsistency rescuing practical morality from the wreck of the ideal. The conclusion is, *Bear ye with one another*. It was accepted by none, and he himself was not faithful enough to it.

Unhappily for Rousseau, he could not shut himself up within the imaginary world that he had created. In the midst of his dreams, "intoxicated with love without an object," a real object appeared to him, and became the aim of his vague transports. He was not deceived in his choice. Madame d'Houdetot showed herself, in all that we know of her, the sincerest, the best, and the most honorable among the women of the world in which she lived. He became acquainted with or appreciated her too late: she was engaged; and such natures engage themselves but once, and for life. It was because she was worthy of him that she could not be his. Rousseau was never to know love returned. He tore himself from the grasp of this ardent and painful passion with a heart rent and a body shattered by the reaction of the soul. Incidents brought about by his love filled up the measure of his sorrows by embroiling him with Madame d'Épinai, and consequently with the *Encyclopedist* group, at the head of which was his best friend, Diderot. The heedlessness, exaggeration, and indiscretion of Diderot, and the distrustful susceptibility of Rousseau, rendered the faults, but not the unhappiness, reciprocal. When Rousseau quitted the Hermitage, sick and exhausted, in the heart of winter, it was with the loss of love, friendship, and every thing that gives value to life.[1]

[1] The monuments of Rousseau's passion, his correspondence with Madame d'Houdetot, were not destroyed, as was long believed. A long letter, which belongs to the end of this crisis, and traces its most touching circumstances in glowing lines, was published in 1822, in the second edition of the *Histoire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (by Musset-Pathay), t. II. p. 545. From this letter was borrowed the sublime saying of the *Confessions* (liv. ix.): "I loved her too much to wish to possess her!" A note, written in the crisis of passion, appeared January 1, 1848, in the *Bibliographie universelle, Journal du libraire et de l'amateur de livres*. Lastly, there exists in manuscript a third letter, in which Jean-Jacques, cured, or at least resigned, expresses the most touching and disinterested sentiments, and gives counsels of elevated morality to her whom

Digitized by Google

His genius was left him, and the duties imposed by genius. He accepted the harsh destiny decreed to him, and plunged anew into his great works; then interrupted them for a moment to serve his country with his pen. D'Alembert, in order to please Voltaire, had warmly urged the Genevese, in the article *Geneva*, of the *Encyclopædia*, to introduce theatrical amusements among them. Rousseau replied by the *Letter to D'Alembert on Plays* (1758). He resumes in this the arguments of the Jansenists and Bossuet against the theatre, on the same principle, — to feel less, and live less, in order to sin less, — with the same excessive austerity and the same injustice, especially against Molière. Nevertheless, he does not condemn the passions in themselves, as the Jansenists had done. "Love is praiseworthy in itself," he says, "like every well-regulated passion; but its excesses are dangerous and inevitable." He does not demand the suppression of theatres in large cities and greatly advanced communities, any more than the destruction of libraries; but he does not wish scenic amusements to be introduced into small towns and countries which have preserved simple manners. "The festivals and spectacles suited to free peoples," he says, "are warlike and gymnastic sports, races, trials of strength and address, and balls and public assemblies of young people of both sexes, as proper as their intimate and habitual mingling is dangerous." Through some exaggerations and paradoxes, there are many sound and strong views in his *Letter*.

Julie, or the *New Héloïse*, completed after the unhappy love of Rousseau, printed in Holland, then introduced into France under the protection of M. de Malesherbes, at length appeared in the winter of 1760-1761. The success was immense. It captivated all women. The most corrupt, the most artificial, felt true nature and life murmuring in the depths of their hearts. "Neither morals nor virtue any longer exists in Europe," Rousseau had said; "but, if any love of them still exists, it is at Paris that it must be sought." The age was touched to the heart. Sentiment, the soul of France, awakened under the tyranny of scepticism and dissolvent analysis. French society, weighed down more deeply, perhaps, by vice than the rest of Europe, but with greater elas-

he had loved. A great number of letters from Madame d'Houdetot to Jean-Jacques also exist, and present her in a very advantageous light. We are indebted for these precious documents to M. J. Ravenel, who has long been preparing the materials for a new edition of Jean-Jacques, — an edition truly final, and the speedy publication of which we cannot too eagerly desire. The letters of Jean-Jacques have not hitherto been published in full; and numerous others addressed to him, all of which are unpublished, give a lively interest to the history of his life and epoch.

Digitized by Google

ticity to rise again, vibrated powerfully. A book which would have been dangerous to a simple and innocent community produced a salutary agitation in a vitiated community, and caused it to *go back to love*, to use the expression of Jean-Jacques.

The most important works of Rousseau, meanwhile, were completed amidst the agitations of his soul: he had abridged the at first so extended career which he had traced for himself, no longer hoping that the breath of inspiration could sustain him for a sufficient time to realize them all. He had renounced plans roughly sketched, destroyed parts of works commenced, and restricted himself to two books,— one of which, the *Social Contract*, was merely a fragment of an abandoned whole, a great work on *political institutions;* the other, *Émile*, had been at first designed to be only a simple paper on education, intended for a young mother who wished to bring up her son herself: this subject, fructified and enlarged by the thought of Rousseau, became a real theory of human nature, of the formation and life of man; an extended analysis of the development of the human being from the cradle to maturity.

Rousseau had been led very naturally to write upon education. Man is corrupted. How is he to be regenerated? If any means exist, there is but one, — education. All the revolutions that might change society without changing the individual, the soul, the real being, would be absolutely useless. The soul changed, every thing changes. Education alone can reach the soul. It was man vitiated by heathenism, it was the human soul, and not society directly, that the gospel came to reform eighteen centuries ago. Man is corrupted anew: he must be again reformed.

What is the child? or, rather, what is the man?

How bring up the child?

Émile is the answer attempted to these two questions.

The point in question is no longer a practical method susceptible of immediate realization as in the primitive idea of the book, but a conception elevated to the highest generality, and consequently placed in conditions almost impossible to unite in point of fact; it is to aspire to an accomplished ideal, which is then to be proposed as an approximate aim to practice. Most of the criticisms on the impossibilities of *Émile* are therefore ill-founded.[1]

[1] "Perhaps the difficulties are insurmountable in the world as it is. . . . I show the end: I do not say that it is possible to attain it; but he who approaches nearest it will have succeeded best." — *Émile*, liv. ii.

Digitized by Google

There are more legitimate objections to be made to Rousseau. He begins by a relapse into his *savage* Utopia. "Every thing is good on quitting the hands of the Author of Nature; every thing degenerates in the hands of man; . . . he changes the nature of the soil, the animals, and man himself; . . . it is necessary to train them for him, and to contort them after his fashion, . . . otherwise things would go on still worse as matters now stand." He appears to consider education only as a necessary evil.[1] He therefore still opposes here a nature abstract, and formed for immutability, to that real and progressive nature of man which he, nevertheless, knows very well how to define elsewhere, and of which *Émile* itself is only the admirable representation.[2]

Farther on, he opposes to each other, no longer an abstraction and a reality, but two realities, two orders of existence equally necessary, — the man and the citizen. "We must choose between making a man and a citizen: it is impossible to make both at the same time." The reason of this antithesis is, that he considers the natural man as absolutely independent, the social man as entirely dependent; so that it is necessary, according to him, to annihilate the first in order to create the second. The country, the *city*, presents itself to him only under that antique form in which the citizen no longer existed except as the member of the State. He apprehends no natural transition between the state of nature and the social state; and it is impossible for him to apprehend any, since the *city*, the nation, is, in his eyes, an entirely voluntary creation of the human will, a pure work of art, a pure *contract* of association. He does not see that there is something natural and instinctive in the grouping of races, the share of Providence in the formation of nationalities. He is the antipodes of that fatalistic, so-called *historic* school, which sees in nations nothing but species of natural vegetation, subjected to the laws of necessary development.

[1] Madame d'Épinai relates in her Memoirs, so hostile to Rousseau, that he shocked her greatly one day by pretending that "the child was not made to be educated, nor the parents to educate him." It was in one of those fits of passion which sometimes caused him to retrograde towards the beginning of his career.

[2] "While each species has its own instinct, man, having none perhaps that belongs to him, appropriates them all. . . . He indemnifies himself perhaps for what he lacks by faculties capable first of supplying the deficiency, and then of raising himself greatly above it." — *Discours sur l'inégalité*, part i. "It cannot be doubted that man is social by nature, or at least fitted to become so. . . . He therefore has innate sentiments relative to his species." — *Émile*.

Digitized by Google

It is not only towards its members, but towards other communities, that the country appears to him exclusively in the antique form and spirit. If he does not comprehend that it is possible to be at once the man of nature and the man of the city, neither does he comprehend that it is possible to be at once the citizen of the country and the citizen of the human race. The *patriots*, his disciples, correcting his lessons by those of the philosophers, his rivals, would one day disclose to the world the ideal of nationalities fraternally associated in humanity, at the same time that they proclaimed in an immortal formula the united rights of the *man* and the *citizen*.[1]

The origin of Rousseau's errors lies in the wholly mathematical logic which he applies to the affairs of life, and which he carries out on a single line, when the resultant should proceed from the combination of different lines. He will not see that the world in general, and each organism in particular, is only a combination, and, consequently, a perpetual compromise between different principles. He only perceives one exclusive principle in each thing and each being, and does not attain to the reconciliation of contradictories; that is, of truths that seem opposite, and duties that seem conflicting. The individual, the family, the country, and humanity should nevertheless be reconciled: the limits are doubtless obscure; but so are those of liberty and Providence, the contradictory *par excellence*, and all the mysteries of life.

He does not attain this, we say; but he nevertheless dimly discerns the solution when he escapes from logic to return to his true nature, to sentiment and practical sense. After laying down the natural man and the citizen as incompatible, he ends in fact by asking whether, nevertheless, they may not be united, and postpones the answer till man has been studied in all the degrees of his formation; that is, to the conclusion of *Émile*. He already answers tacitly by admitting that a father owes men to his species, social men to society, and citizens to the State.[2]

There are, he continues, two forms of education,—the one public and common, the other private and domestic. Public education no longer exists, and can no longer exist. There is neither

[1] A philosopher of our days has given a beautiful formula to the same thought,—*the complete man in complete society* (Pierre Leroux). The value of this formula is wholly independent of the individual doctrines of its author.

[2] Herein is found a touching allusion to his own faults. "Neither poverty, nor toil, nor any earthly consideration, can exempt a father from supporting and bringing up his children himself." — *Émile*, l. i.

Digitized by Google

country nor citizens *among the moderns* (in the European monarchies).

He does not, therefore, develop here his ideas on public education, which are discerned scattered through his other writings.[1] He desires this to be especially gymnastic, — exercises of address and strength, manual labor rendered attractive, practical ideas given by the things themselves, singing and drawing; in ideas of another class, those of which the child can feel the practical utility, as reading, writing, and reckoning: ideas of national history, under the form of narratives, without books or dates, should come at the end, with those of morality, natural religion, and duty in general. The instruction should be given by lay-teachers, and, so far as possible, married. All this relates, as will be seen, to that first degree of instruction necessary for all, which the State owes to all, and which the State, in France as in other Catholic countries, gave at that time to no one, — a negligence, the penalty of which has been and is still cruelly expiated by French society.

There remains domestic or natural education. This is what he is about to develop by making himself the preceptor of an imaginary pupil, whom he selects of healthy body and average mind, in a temperate climate like France, in order to make him as general a type of man as possible.

But another work must precede that of the preceptor. He has just recalled women to real love: he now recalls them to maternity. Already Buffon had protested in the name of Reason and Nature against the barbarous slavery of swaddling-clothes, and reproached mothers for their forgetfulness of the duty of suckling their children; but reason had spoken in vain. The voice of feeling was destined to be more powerful. There is nothing superior to that celebrated fragment which begins, "Would ye return each to his first duties, begin with the mothers." It is with a mixture of passion and irresistible logic that Rousseau shows morals reforming of themselves, the family becoming reorganized, and with it all the virtues that follow in its train, as soon as mothers *deign to nourish their children.*

To give the child more liberty and less dominion over others; neither to command nor to obey him; to govern him, not by reason, but by possibilities and impossibilities; to suffer him to depend upon facts alone; to let experience be his only master; to permit the first education to be purely negative; to prevent

[1] In the article *Économie politique;* in the *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne,* etc.

Digitized by Google

rather than act; to prevent habits from being formed in order to preserve liberty; to prevent vices from being born (there are none original[1]); to guarantee the heart from evil and the mind from error, instead of teaching virtue and truth directly,— such are the most general precepts given by Rousseau with respect to childhood.

The necessity for fundamental moral notions having arrived, they must be limited at first to immediate utility. The idea of property, originally founded on labor, and the idea of engagements, of voluntary agreements, are the starting-point. Thus Rousseau, who condemned property when he condemned society, now that he accepts the necessity of society, puts property at the basis: this is very logical. Only he associates with the idea of property that of obligatory assistance to the poor.[2]

The true use of childhood has been to prepare instruments for the soul by strengthening the body through a kind of experimental physics wholly instinctive. Study should not commence until the age of twelve or thirteen, when curiosity for knowledge begins to awaken with foresight in the child approaching adolescence, and he begins to ask *the use* of every thing. His studies should be directed at first to sensible objects, the phenomena of Nature; then to the practice of the natural or individual arts, which leads to that of the industrial or collective arts. The child should learn to esteem the arts in proportion to their utility, and not to their rarity or difficulty. Here there is the same evolution of ideas as with respect to property. Agriculture and metallurgy, lately execrated for having civilized the human race, are eulogized as among the arts most worthy of respect. The ideal pupil, *Émile*, is to learn a manual art, a trade. "The child is rich! What matters it? . . . You trust to the existing order of society, without realizing that this order is subject to inevitable revolutions, and that it is impossible either to foresee or to prevent what may happen to your children. . . . We are approaching critical times, and the age of revolution. I consider it impossible for the great monarchies of Europe to endure much longer."

[1] Rousseau decides here, somewhat hastily, a very mysterious question, — *man is naturally good*. This is true, abstractly, of the species; but what of the individual? How many native diversities do children bring into the world! The religions of the East and of Gaul, and all the ancient spiritualistic philosophy from Socrates to Origen, had endeavored to solve the problem of these diversities by the hypothesis of preëxistence.

[2] "When the poor were pleased to consent that there should be rich, the rich promised to support all those who should not have wherewithal to live either through their property or their labor." — *Émile*, liv. ii.

Digitized by Google

Ten years before, Rousseau had perceived the Revolution only as a vague and distant possibility, upon which it was not even allowable to seek to fix his eyes. Events had far advanced since that time.[1]

Voltaire and many others greatly derided the *gentleman carpenter* of Rousseau. Thirty years had not passed, when more than one high personage had reason to regret not knowing how to earn a livelihood by the saw or the plane.[2]

It is not only through prudence, but through duty, that *Émile* is taught to labor. Every citizen, according to Rousseau, owes to society the cost of his support in personal toil.[3]

Youth approaches. Sensation has reigned alone in the earliest infancy; then reason has been awakened; now sentiment is about to speak in turn. "We have made," says the preceptor, "an acting and thinking being: to complete the man, it is necessary to make a loving being."

It is to be observed that the order of development assigned to man by Rousseau is in conformity with the order of the great psychologic ternary, — *strength, intellect, and love.*

Behold the age of the passions, the age of true life! Are we to stifle the passions, are we to prevent them from being born? Madness! The passions are from Nature. But are *all* the passions from Nature? No.

Here is marked the radical opposition between Rousseau and the theorists who have pretended to organize humanity on the satisfaction of all the factitious passions born of accidental circumstances, on the abandonment to all the fancies brought forth by an unregulated imagination, and who have effaced all distinction

[1] Rousseau speaks much more clearly, some years after, in a passage of his correspondence, in which he expresses the opinion that the *Seven-Years' War* would have brought about the immediate destruction of the French monarchy, had it not been for the talents of the minister, Choiseul.

[2] Rousseau makes his pupil a mechanic, and not a farm-laborer, because "the mechanic is free, and the farm-laborer is a slave." He supposes a social condition in which the mechanic always finds work ready to his hand, and does not foresee the great overcrowding of modern industrial society.

[3] He does not claim that this labor must necessarily be manual. He has been warmly reproached for the exaggeration of the following passage: "An annuitant, whom the State pays for doing nothing, differs little, in my eyes, from a robber that lives at the expense of the passers-by." Such an hyperbole is deservedly unjustifiable; but it has not the meaning which has been given it. Rousseau does not dream of discussing the lawfulness of annuities: he attacks the annuitant, not because he receives the revenue of the capital which he has loaned to the State, but because he takes advantage of this revenue to do nothing, to avoid paying his debt of labor to society, to consume without producing, as is said to-day.

Digitized by Google

between the passions. Rousseau has not proscribed fancy in the child to authorize it in the man.

"To feel the true relations of man both in the species and in the individual, and to regulate the affections of the soul according to these relations by guiding the imagination, — such is the summary of all human wisdom in the use of the passions."

The generation of the passions, whether natural or lawful, follows; for there are some which are lawful, which are not immediately natural.

First, The love of self, from which proceeds the love of our fellows and all benevolent feelings, and which must not be confounded with self-love, or the feeling of distinction, the parent of hateful and jealous feelings.

Secondly, The love of woman. The inclination of nature and instinct does not determine the object of this, which is determined by reason, unknown to us.[1] "Love is made blind, because it has better sight than we, and sees affinities which we could not discern. Love is not a natural passion: it is the law and curb of the inclinations of nature."

He here replies to Buffon and himself.[2]

Thirdly, Friendship. This results indirectly from the awakening of the soul by sexual sensibility, as yet without object: it precedes, in fact, the essential passion, love, but proceeds from it in principle.

Fourthly, General friendship, or the love of humanity.

This review of the affections of the youth is concluded by reflections of great beauty on this necessity of attachments, which is at once the result of our imperfection and the foundation of our happiness. "God alone enjoys an absolute and solitary happiness. If any imperfect being could be sufficient for himself, he would be alone; he would be miserable." This truth is applicable to all the degrees of the finite being, whatever may be the perfection which he is supposed to have attained. The finite being is not designed to live alone, face to face with the Infinite. He is created incomplete that he may complete himself by another, at once like and different from himself. Herein is the

[1] He means, not reflective reason, but a sort of intuitive reason which proceeds from feeling.

[2] See *ante*, p. 65. He has hitherto limited the meaning of the word *nature* to instinctive force; but he does not do this always, which sometimes gives rise to equivocation. Just now, he understood by nature, which seems to us far preferable, all the faculties of man, and not merely the physical basis.

Digitized by Google

final cause of the indestructible difference of the sexes. When Rousseau afterwards dreams of the future life under the form of an eternal solitary contemplation, it is no longer the philosopher that speaks, but only the unhappy lover and forsaken friend,—the wearied and wounded soul that aspires to repose.

Rousseau is alike admirable when he shows to a dissolute community the consequence of purity of morals preserved to an advanced epoch of youth, and teaches the diversion of the ardor of the senses by the very activity of the body, the mind, and the heart. For this critical age, on which the whole life depends, he has reserved and accumulated all that can seize and captivate a youthful soul, to which every thing is new in the world of the mind,—history, poetry, ethics, philology, the study of the good and the beautiful, and, lastly, at the radiant summit of that intellectual edifice which rises to the heavens, the supreme revelations of God and the immortal soul.

The system according to which Rousseau conducts his pupil almost to the age of manhood before making him acquainted with his Creator and himself, on account of the inability to form an idea of a rational God which he ascribes to the child, has, however, been opposed, and with reason. It is an exaggeration of the *negative* method adopted towards the child by Rousseau. There exists a decisive objection: in whatever condition the child is supposed, unless sequestered from all intercourse with man, it is absolutely impossible that he should not hear of God before the age of sixteen or eighteen; consequently he could not thus be spared the danger, dreaded by Rousseau, of forming false ideas concerning him. Rousseau might, perhaps, have developed the idea of God according to the principles which he applies to the development of man, and, since he governs the child by the idea of force or necessity, have presented God to him at first under this aspect, then as intellect and love.

Be this as it may, if he erred, what a magnificent redemption of this error was the SAVOYARD VICAR'S CONFESSION OF FAITH! The reader cannot refrain from a thrill of awe, when the philosopher, when the man, rejecting the fictions of the writer, enters directly upon the stage with the priest of Turin, his first master, and propounds, in the presence of the Alps and the rising sun, the fundamental questions of nature and human destiny. The annals of the human mind had not witnessed so solemn a moment since the hour when the doubt of Descartes was resolved in his immortal affirmation.

Digitized by Google

The philosophy of sentiment was about to have, like that of pure reason, its *Dissertation on Method.*

Reason is obscured anew; doubt has returned: the suffering soul is fluctuating in the infinite variety of human opinions. What are we to do?

To limit our researches to what immediately interests us, and to be wise enough to remain ignorant of the rest; to throw aside the philosophers and their reasonings, which give us nothing but negative results, and take another guide, the internal light, the conscience; to admit as evident the ideas to which, in the sincerity of our heart, we cannot refuse our consent, and as true those which appear to us to have a necessary connection with the latter, and not to trouble ourselves about the rest when they lead to nothing practically useful.

It is, therefore, the evidence of the heart, moral evidence, and no longer rational and mathematical evidence, that becomes the principle of certainty. The road which Rousseau aspires to follow is not the transcendent road of Descartes, but that within the reach of the simple, — the highway of the human mind.[1]

"But what am I," he continues, "to judge of things? It is necessary, first of all, to examine myself."

He does not divest himself of all contingency, as Descartes had done. He places himself immediately between the phenomena. "I exist, and I have senses by which I am affected." He seeks to prove that the causes or objects of the sensations which take place within us are outside of us. He would have been more faithful to his principle by affirming the reality of the objects, of the *non ego*, as a truth of sentiment. Arrived more or less legitimately at the reality of matter (that is to say, of that which he feels outside of himself, and which acts upon his senses), he looks again within himself, and discovers there an active principle in the faculty of comparison. "Our sensations are passive," he had already said; "but our perceptions or ideas arise from an active principle." We are here far from Condillac and *transformed sensation.* Behold the starting-point of the metaphysical renaissance! Only Rousseau does not yet go back to the first manifestation of the active principle, and leaves to a more methodical philosopher[2] the demonstration of the activity of the

[1] *Practical reason*, which Kant opposes to *pure reason*, is nothing else than the sentiment or conscience of Rousseau. The powerful but ultra work of Kant, the *Criticism of Pure Reason*, is the exaggeration of the work of Rousseau. Kant is the outgrowth of Rousseau, like Hegel and Schelling, of Spinoza and Buffon.

[2] La Romiguière. Rousseau sees clearly that the idea of number and all the ideas

Digitized by Google

soul already in practice in the attention which precedes comparison.

"Sure of myself, of my own activity," he continues, "I look outside myself. Motion is not essential to this matter which my senses reveal to me, the natural state of which is repose. I recognize two kinds of motion in bodies, — the one communicated, the other spontaneous and voluntary: the first is that of inorganic matter, of the world as a whole, subject to general forces which are not beings, but constant laws; the second is my own, that of man, and I believe also, by analogy, that of animals. The first causes of motion are not in matter. From one effect after another, it is still necessary to go back to some will as the first cause; for to suppose a progress of causes to infinity is to suppose none at all. The principle of all action, of all motion, is in the will of a free being: a will, therefore, moves the universe, and animates nature.[1]

Matter moved testifies a will. Matter moved according to certain laws shows an intelligence. The unity of the system of the world attests a sole intelligence. It is a monstrous improbability to pretend that the order of the universe results from a fortuitous combination of elements: it is impossible that passive and lifeless matter should have produced living and sentient beings, that a blind fatality should have produced intelligent beings, that that which is devoid of thought should have produced thinking beings. Can there be more in the effect than there is in the cause?

Intelligence, power, will, and goodness are the first attributes which I perceive in that Being, active through itself, which moves and arranges the universe, and which I call God.

A new return to self ensues. What is the rank of the human species in the universe? Here appears a grievous contrast. Relatively to the universe, the human species holds the first rank,

of relations are not given us by the passive principle of sensation, although sensation furnishes the occasion and material for them.

[1] He declares himself unable to comprehend living organic molecules (Buffon), and, with much greater reason, inorganic matter, sentient without possessing senses (Maupertuis and Diderot). He justly denies spontaneous motion to the pretended molecules. How, indeed, would they put themselves in motion without will, without being impelled by an internal impulse? *Necessary motion* is an expression devoid of meaning. As to the words, *universal force, blind force diffused in nature*, they are not destitute of all meaning, as Rousseau affirms; but they have a double meaning. *Force* designates, in its most precise and most profound meaning, a being; in less exact language, a law. *Universal force* signifies either *a universal being, a unit by nature*, which abolishes the reality of molecules, or a law *emanating from the universal being*, which brings back the initial will, — Pantheism or Deism.

Digitized by Google

at least on earth, and crowns the general order; relatively to itself, it offers nothing but confusion and disorder. Are we to accuse Providence? No. Man is free.[1] He can choose. He can err. Thence proceeds evil on the earth. But whence come the errors of man? From his duality. Two principles are discerned in him, one of which elevates him to truth and goodness, the other of which lowers him, and places him under the subjugation of the senses. One is thinking and sentient, simple and indivisible substance, mind; the other, inert and divisible substance, matter.

Had Rousseau studied Leibnitz more, he would not perhaps have been so positive concerning the two substances and the character which he attributes to matter. The solution which he gives of the origin of evil is incident to an hypothesis concerning the nature of things, which would have been greatly out of place in the *Vicar's Profession of Faith*, and which he takes care not to introduce therein, but which he repeatedly enunciates in his *Correspondence*.[2] Rousseau, strange to say, leaned to the dualism of the ancient Greek philosophers: he was inclined to believe in Matter uncreated and coeternal with Mind, and to see in God less the Omnipotent, the absolute and infinite Being, than the Demiurge, the Arranger of Matter. If the world was not created better, it was apparently because Matter opposed obstacles which Mind was unable to overcome: God was truly sovereign only in the spiritual world of the future life, in which all was to be his work. Nothing so clearly shows the weakness of the human mind as to see the restorer of religious sentiment causing the retrogression of the theological idea of twenty centuries, disregarding the supreme and necessary unity of the creation, through an opposite excess to that of Pantheism, and suffering shipwreck on that equivocal formula of God as pure spirit, the danger of which Malebranche and Fénelon had, notwithstanding, pointed out so clearly.

Apart from this strange opinion, Rousseau replies, with respect to the unmerited ills of man, or those which appear such, by the necessity of trial, by moral progress purchased at the cost of suffering, and by the compensations of the future life.

"What is this life of the soul," he continues, "beyond death? Is the soul immortal *by its nature?* I know not: nevertheless,

[1] To be free is to be determined by nothing foreign to one's self. "To prevent man from being wicked, is it necessary to confine him to instinct, and make him a brute? Could Providence give the prize for well-doing to him who had been unable to do wrong?" This is Rousseau's own answer to the regrets expressed in the two *Dissertations* for the state of nature, when men were ignorant both of good and evil.

[2] Letter to Voltaire, August, 1756; Letter to M. ——, January, 1769.

Digitized by Google

I apprehend how the body is destroyed by the division of the parts; while I do not apprehend how the soul, a simple being, can die." He might have added, that the term *death*, signifying only the dissolution of composites, is devoid of meaning, applied to a simple being: *annihilation* is a word, it is not an idea; for it is absolutely impossible to conceive that a thing which exists can cease to exist.

"The remembrance of the good or evil use of the present life will constitute, in the next, the felicity of the good and the torment of the wicked, when, delivered from the illusion of the senses, we shall enjoy the contemplation of the Supreme Being and the eternal truths in him. I know not whether the torments of the wicked will be everlasting: I have difficulty in believing it."

This doubt is a reservation which it is not easy to comprehend in so bold a book; for he affirms the negative repeatedly in a very decided manner in his *Correspondence*. This part of the *Vicar's Profession of Faith* was to be completed by two letters of the highest importance, — one to Voltaire, in August, 1756; the other to an anonymous person, January, 1769.[1]

"The essential truths," he continues, "thus deduced from the impression of sensible objects and of internal feeling, it remains to inquire what maxims I should draw from them to fulfil my destiny on earth according to the intention of Him who placed me here. These rules I find written by Nature in the depths of my heart. We believe ourselves following the impulse of Nature while we are resisting it: in listening to what it says to our senses, we mistake what it says to our hearts. . . . There is at the bottom of the soul an innate principle of justice and virtue, independent of experience, the basis of our judgment, in spite of ourselves:

[1] The letter to Voltaire was written at the moment when the latter abandoned optimism for a grievous scepticism. Rousseau proposes therein to correct the optimistic maxim, *every thing is good* which seems to deny the too certain particular evil, by *the whole is good;* that is, *every thing is good in relation to the whole.* He believes that "each material being is created in the best possible manner in relation to the whole, and each intelligent and sensible being in the best possible manner in relation to himself. But this rule must be applied to the whole duration of each sensible being, and not to some particular instant of its duration, such as human life; which shows how closely the question of Providence pertains to that of the immortality of the soul . . . and to that of eternal punishment, which neither you nor I, nor any man that thinks well of God, will ever believe. . . . If God exists, he is perfect; if he is perfect, he is wise, powerful, and just; if he is just and powerful, my soul is immortal." He admits that it is impossible to give an *incontestable, mathematical* demonstration either of God or the immortal soul: these two fundamental truths are proved by feeling. On eternal punishment, see also the Letter to M. Vernes, February, 1758; and the Letter to M. ——, January, 1769.

Digitized by Google

I call this conscience. The (immediate) acts of the conscience are not judgments, but feelings. The senses mislead us: reason itself deceives us; conscience never deceives us." The morality of interest is contrary to Nature: we are naturally full of feelings, altogether foreign to material interest; of feelings which impel us either towards our fellows, or towards the ideal under all its aspects. It is untrue that morality varies according to time and place: its essential principles are everywhere the same through the diversity of customs. The natural feelings speak in favor of the common interest: reason refers every thing to the individual; virtue cannot be established by reason alone. The wicked (that is, they who do not listen to conscience) refer every thing to themselves, and make themselves the centre of every thing: the good regulate themselves with regard to the whole, to the common centre, which is God, and the concentric circles, which are human beings. If the Divinity does not exist, if there is no centre, the wicked are right, and the good are mad.[1]

True happiness is not of this world: while waiting for the true life, let us contemplate, let us meditate on God in his works, without asking any thing of him; or, at least, let us ask him only to set us right if we fall in good faith into some dangerous error. In elevating itself to God, the soul gives itself, by its own effort, what it asks of its Creator.

There is at the bottom of this a tendency towards the Pelagian theory, which considers the moral creation as definitively made, and which, absorbed by a single side of the truth, — the side of liberty, — does not see the coöperation, the necessary support, of God in every thing; which does not see, in a word, God *immanent* in the world. If the reasonableness of asking God to modify for our individual advantage the phenomena of the physical order, the order of necessity, governed by general laws, may be disputed, it is precisely in the moral order, the order of liberty, that we are to solicit his assistance. God is not only an ocean from which the soul draws at pleasure, but a living ocean into which the soul is plunged, and without the perpetual, vivifying action of which, the soul neither could nor would be any thing. *God is the abode of spirits*, says Malebranche. Rousseau, as we have already indicated, falls at times into the opposite excess to Pantheism.

He nevertheless triumphantly rehabilitates the only two *necessary* ideas, God and the immortal soul; and he rehabilitates them, as

[1] The lack of sanction in the morality of the philosophers (infidels), he says farther on, renders this morality powerless.

Digitized by Google

he proposed, only by means which are within the individual reach of all mankind,— by the impression of sensible objects or the observation of Nature, and by internal feeling or conscience. He willingly leaves outside his method an order of proofs of immense authority, but one which exacts a knowledge above the common reach; that is, the historical proofs founded on the consent of the human race, on universal feeling, which show us these two ideas serving as the basis of human societies since the origin of things.[1]

Natural religion, that is, that resulting from the moral nature of man, once established, he asks how any other religion than the natural one can be necessary; what it can add that would be useful to morality. If we had listened only to what God says to the heart of man, there would never have been but one religion on earth. God wishes to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; this is the essential point: the external worship is a matter of human police. Human evidence on points of fact is void when it is not confirmed by reason: even when it is not contrary thereto, it is prodigiously difficult to verify.

He repeats Spinoza's arguments against miracles, and raises up objections to the absolute authority of the revelations contained in books. "The infallible authority of the Church, argued by the Catholics, avails nothing, if as great an array is needed to prove this authority as directly to prove the Scriptures."

He does not, however, explicitly deduce the rejection of positive revelation, and only rejects the obligation to acknowledge it in order to be saved. Here is found that magnificent testimony rendered to the gospel and its author, placed by him above all books and all men.[2] This testimony was never contradicted; but it was explained by subsequent writings,— the *Letters from the Mountain*, and the *Letter* of January 15, 1769. He admits, as to *moral proofs*, the revelation (of Jesus Christ) as having emanated from the Spirit of God, "without knowing the manner thereof, and without tormenting himself to discover it." He admits that the history of the life of Jesus has not been *essentially* altered,

[1] Some exceptions have been sought as to the immortality of the soul: there are none as to the existence of God. Rousseau takes up the historical proofs in his *Lettre à l'archevêque de Paris*.

[2] We discover, in this so justly celebrated passage, somewhat too strong a tendency to exaggerate the opposition in order to strengthen the conclusions. To glorify Christ, it was not necessary to depreciate Socrates, or so much to despise the Jewish people, the people of the Maccabees, in order to set off the sublimity of what sprung from them. The pious recluses of the wilderness, the Essenes, were not unworthy to prepare the way for the cradle of the Messiah.

Digitized by Google

and, while setting aside *proof by miracles*, does not deny "the extraordinary things which Jesus, enlightened by the Spirit of God, was able to effect by *natural means unknown to his disciples and to us*." He makes a distinction between the Christianity of Jesus Christ and that of St. Paul, "who had not known Christ."

Thus his final conclusion, his inmost thought, is the acknowledgment of the divine mission of Christ, and consequently of the government of Providence on earth, combined with the sufficiency of natural religion for salvation. We feel what a distance there is between the Christian Deism of Rousseau and the Epicurean Deism of Voltaire. The Deism of Rousseau differs little from what is to-day called Unitarianism.

Rousseau grants that separate systems of religion may exist by reason of climate or of the genius of nations, and that they are good when God is served properly therein: but he condemns, in the name of morality, those which are based on intolerance, and on the dogma, that, outside the Church, there is no salvation; or in other terms, on the dogma of infallibility combined with that of eternal punishment.

"Keep your soul in a state always to desire that there should be a God, and you will never doubt that there is one. Avoid proud unbelief like blind fanaticism. Dare to confess God among the philosophers; dare to preach humanity to the intolerant: you will be alone on your side, perhaps; . . . no matter. . . . Say what is true, do what is right: the most important thing to man is to fulfil his duties upon earth, and it is in forgetting himself that he labors for himself. Private interest deceives us: the hope of justice is the only thing that is not deceitful."

Such are the lofty and religious conclusions of this celebrated *Profession of Faith*, — the greatest work bequeathed to us by the eighteenth century.

Is this to say that the Deism of Rousseau, even abstaining from touching on the question of positive religions, is sufficient to satisfy the human mind? This belief is true: it is pure, but restricted within narrow limits. These limits were needed: there are times when the mind is forced to condense itself in order to concentrate its strength. It was necessary, in order to resist materialism, and, above all, scepticism, to fall back upon certain and fundamental dogmas, to *save the trunk at the expense of the branches*,[1] and to confine himself within what was directly and im-

[1] This saying, repeated by Rousseau in *Émile*, originated with Duclos in an unpublished letter to Rousseau. It carries him very far. He is not content with omitting:

Digitized by Google

mediately necessary to the moral life. The human soul was not destined, however, to remain imprisoned within this immutable circle, any more than society to remain motionless in that pastoral life so much regretted by Rousseau. For the progress of the intellect, for the very development of the moral and religious sentiment, the glance of the soul must strive to discern what it is not permitted to embrace. In practical life, in all that is not positive and certain duty, are we guided otherwise than by probabilities and hypotheses? Yet we would banish them from ideal life: we would abstain from extending the inductions of our mind, and directing the impulses of our hearts, towards the sphere of ontology and theodicy; towards the degrees of which we have a presentiment; towards the endless scale of the future life! What an immense gap is left in the present life if we have not an undefined conception of the future life, and if we do not draw conclusions from the present relations to the relations beyond the tomb! Is the domain of certainty, moreover, immutable for man?

After this vast and sublime episode, Rousseau returns to his subject, and finishes his work. He has educated the man: he is about to educate the woman, and to conduct them both to the decisive crisis where their existences unite to form the complete human being. Parts of the first books of *Émile* are applicable to what is common to both sexes: the fifth book, entitled *Sophie*, by a touching remembrance of Madame d'Houdetot, comprises every thing that specially concerns the education of woman. The differences between the two kinds of education are characterized with lofty sagacity. Rousseau's conclusion concerning the two sexes is moral equality with diversity of functions. He at once refutes, tacitly or explicitly, the popular traditions concerning the inferiority of woman,[1] and the errors of the Utopists, who had sought

he rejects all the developments of theology, and sees nothing but words without ideas in all these *mysterious dogmas*, among which he ranks the Trinity itself. His language does not differ from that of Montesquieu or Voltaire. It is evident that he has made no attempt to account for them. In setting aside the Christian theology, he does not even draw the necessary consequences of Platonic idealism. He considers God as the author of all goodness, and not sufficiently as goodness itself; justice, truth, and goodness being nothing else than God himself, or the Perfect, considered in separate points of view. For want of fathoming this idea, Rousseau does not explain that so-called Atheists are often only souls living morally on a few fragments of God, so to speak. An Atheist who believes in *virtue* or *order* is not an Atheist: he calls God *virtue* or *order*; that is all. Only knowing God *solely* in this point of view, his isolated and fragmentary ideal is merely an abstraction without support, connection, or complement; and his faith has the appearance of inconsistency, since it has neither sanction nor cause.

[1] The reason of the inferiority attributed by the ancients to woman was derived es-

Digitized by Google

in antiquity, or who were to seek, after him, to assimilate woman to man, and to call her to the same civil functions; errors under which, on close investigation, will be discovered the idea, as absurd in a physiological as in a moral point of view, that woman is only an imperfect man. Rousseau, however, accords to man the form of command in the household, and maintains his title of chief (man, in fact, is the *chief*, the head, as woman is the *heart*, of the human couple); but he comments on the *obedience* of woman in a manner quite reassuring to her dignity, while admirably defining the nature of the feminine mind.

"The reason of women is a practical reason, which causes them adroitly to find the means of arriving at a known end, but which does not cause them to discover this end. In the association of the sexes, woman is the eye, and man the arm, but with such dependence upon each other,[1] that it is from man that woman learns what must be seen, and from woman that man learns what must be done. In the harmony that reigns between them, we know not which contributes the greater share. Each follows the impulse of the other; each obeys, and both are masters. . . . Man commands; woman rules him who commands: . . . she reigns by causing herself to be commanded to do what she wishes.

"The investigation of abstract truth, the generalities of the

pecially from the physical order. Man was, to them, the active principle; woman, the passive principle: whence, by a deduction seemingly logical, man was mind, and woman matter. The question necessarily changed its aspect with the modern world when it was perceived that woman has the preponderance in the domain of sentiment if man has the same advantage in the domain of reason. Man has the superiority in two of the essential attributes of the pyschological ternary, — strength and intellect; woman in a single one, — love: but this attribute, the last in the abstract analysis of the metaphysical generation, is the first in the domain of reality; it is the very breath of life. To man belongs both the scientific determination of ideas and the administration of external things, action, work in general; also great politicians, great theologians and metaphysicians, great dogmatic moralists, and even great artists, are, in general, men, and not women: man gives the form to every thing; but woman gives the substance to almost every thing, and inspires almost every thing. She does not create; she causes man to do so. It is, moreover, only in theoretical reason, in the powers of generalization, that woman is inferior to man: she has, as Rousseau shows, the superiority in practical reason. Practical reason, the logic of second causes, separated from metaphysical reason and general principles, too often transforms itself into a critical, negative spirit; and the two essential elements of woman, sentiment and practical reason, are then at war within her.

[1] The dependence of the sexes is reciprocal, he says elsewhere: nevertheless, woman is more dependent on man than man on woman. "This indisputable difference pertains equally in woman to her inferiority in physical strength and her superiority in affectional strength. She is more dependent, because she has greater need both of physical assistance and moral affection; she is more dependent, because she loves more.

Digitized by Google

sciences, are not within the province of women. Their studies should be wholly practical. It is for them to make the application of the principles which man has discovered, and it is for them to make the observations which lead man to the establishment of these principles. Men study ideas and external nature: women study men. Things of genius belong to man: women are the best judges of things of taste. Men philosophize better than women on the human heart; but the latter read the heart of men better than they. It is for women to discover, so to speak, experimental morality: it is for us to reduce it to a system. Woman has more wit, and man more genius: woman observes, and man reasons. From this coöperation results the clearest light and the most complete knowledge that the human mind can acquire of itself."

The question between public and private education does not exist with respect to women, according to Rousseau. Every young girl should be brought up by her mother. "One of the reasons why morals are better in general in Protestant countries is that conventual education is unknown there."[1] Maternal education harmonizes well, in Rousseau, with another essential idea,—that young girls should enjoy great liberty, a great latitude in external life, and that married women should confine themselves to their households; that assemblies and public places are calculated for those whose choice is not yet made, and not for those whose existence is fixed. In all his works, he dwells strongly upon this idea. He contrasts, on this point, the customs of the ancient Greeks and the English with those of the French, while insisting on the necessity of embellishing by the arts and by a certain elegant simplicity that domestic life to which he wishes to restrict women, and from which he sees their legitimate influence unceasingly diffused among external things which are interdicted to their direct action.

Nothing is more delicate and just than his views on the principle that women are the natural judges of the merit of men. When they have lost their ascendency, and when their judgments are no longer any thing to men, it is, in his opinion, the certain token of moral decline. The desire of winning their approbation, and, with much more reason, their love, is that great motive power of the actions of men which Helvetius distorts so grossly by limiting it to the desire of winning the pleasures of the senses. There is, nevertheless, an apparent contradiction here in Rousseau, when

[1] Fénelon, at heart, thought the same. — See his work on the *Education of Girls*.

Digitized by Google

he dwells at length upon the great things inspired by the enthusiasm of love, and, notwithstanding, avows "that all is illusion in love." The reason is, that he gives two meanings to the word *love*, as to the word *nature*. He sees here in love only the aspiration towards the ideal: the beloved object is taken for the type of the perfection that is in the soul; therefore it is not the mistress, but the ideal, that is loved. This was, indeed, the ruling characteristic of chivalric love. But Rousseau had already indicated another kind of love, — that sentiment of affinity or sympathy, founded no longer on the illusions of the soul, but on the essential fitness of nature; that love in which we love a person instead of a type, an imperfect person, and one whom we know to be imperfect, but susceptible of improvement. This sentiment is real love, and, in some sort, comprises the other kind of love; for we would not love if the person beloved did not bear some relation to what our particular nature disposes us to regard as the type of her sex. Whenever the affinity between two beings of different sexes is complete, whenever they aspire to precisely the same ideal, they are, so to speak, a single moral person, and the formation of this indestructible association is, doubtless, the true final cause of the diversity of the sexes. Rousseau does not succeed in harmonizing his double conception of love, or in clearly defining his idea. The reason is, that, limiting himself to considering love in the relations of the present life, he does not follow it beyond time; and that this sentiment, like all that belongs to the infinite, has neither its final cause nor its law in this world. Rousseau has flashes of inspiration on this subject in his *Julie;* but they are only flashes. It would have been requisite to develop and complete Dante and Petrarch beyond the limit of the belief of the Middle Ages; and this work Rousseau does not accomplish.

He shows at least great practical wisdom in the application to marriage of that principle of natural fitness which he had recognized in love. "Where this kind of fitness, the only essential one, is superseded by the fitness of conventionality and public opinion, and where marriages are made by paternal authority, good morals and the happiness of marriage are sacrificed to the apparent order of society."[1]

[1] "Parents choose their daughter's husband, and consult her for form's sake. It should be the reverse: the daughter should make the choice, and consult her parents. Would you make happy marriages, forget human institutions, and consult nature. Conventional relations are not without importance; but the influence of natural relations prevails over them to such a degree, that it decides the fate of life." He dwells, besides, on all the value that should be placed upon fitness of education.

Digitized by Google

It is here, at the moment of marrying his pupil, that he solves the problem which he has declared insoluble — the harmony of the man and the citizen — by acknowledging that it is necessary to be a citizen before being a husband and father. It does not always depend upon us to exercise the rights and fulfil the duties of the citizen; but nothing can exempt us from knowing them. Even if we have no longer a country, a free country, a native land, at least, remains to us: the native land may become the country.[1] The master, therefore, reveals to the pupil the principles of political law, which we are about to behold elaborated in the *Social Contract*,[2] and terminates his work with counsels of admirable delicacy and good sense on the rights and duties of the young spouses, and on the means of insuring domestic happiness so far as human imperfection permits. This is, indeed, true civilization, the civilization of moral progress, that reforms the real brutality disguised under our social refinements.[3]

Émile, despite the objections aroused by certain portions, is perhaps the profoundest study of human nature existing in our language, or in any other of the modern tongues. It is certainly the book that suggests the most thought, even where the author does not think corrrectly. What genius was needed to arrive at such conclusions after setting out from the impracticable beginning of the two *Dissertations*, and to make paradox the road to wisdom! It may be said, without exaggeration, that this book was an ark of safety, launched by Providence on the waves of scepticism and materialism, and that it collected all the essential sentiments, all the fundamental principles of moral life, which were about to be swallowed up. Suppose Rousseau stricken out of the eighteenth century, whither, we ask seriously and sincerely, would the progress of the human mind have drifted?

Émile really sums up the whole work of Rousseau for his other

[1] He treats the proverb, *Ubi benè, ibi patria*, as *execrable*.

[2] "Political law is still to be born. . . . Grotius has, at the bottom, the same principles as Hobbes. The only modern able to create this science would have been the illustrious Montesquieu; but he forebore to treat of the principles of political law. He contented himself with the positive law of established governments." — *Émile*, liv. v.

[3] In order to follow the development of ideas, compare Rousseau on woman with the publications of our times which have treated of woman in general, of marriage, and of the education of girls, particularly Madame Necker de Saussure's admirable book *L'Éducation progressive; Le Mariage chrétien*, by Madame de Gasparin, in which is found the great saying, *Marriage is the end of marriage;* and *L'Histoire morale des femmes*, by M. Ernest Legouvé, a healthy and solid work, at once very favorable to the true emancipation of woman, and greatly opposed to the Utopists, who pervert the nature of women under pretext of enfranchising them.

Digitized by Google

monument: that *Social Contract*, destined to so brilliant an influence on the Revolution which he had just predicted, and for which he was paving the way, was only the development of a part of *Émile*. *Émile* is the book of man in general, of man under all his aspects: the *Social Contract* is the book of the politician, the citizen.

Rousseau does not propose therein an absolute and abstract type. What he seeks are "laws as they might be, with men as they are," and the reconciliation of utility and justice. "The social order," he says, "does not come from Nature: it is, therefore, founded on agreements."

Few axioms have given rise to such grave discussion. Against the principle of the *Social Contract* have been argued original agreements, in the name of the *necessary* development of humanity, or providential laws. Rousseau himself acknowledges in *Émile* that man "is born social, or, at least, formed to become so;" from which it has been concluded that he contradicts himself. He does not contradict himself; but he does wrong in not explaining himself. Here, again, is found the eternal duality. Yes, Providence made men for society; but it made them free, and they associated together voluntarily, and not because constrained to do so by the physical laws of Nature: the voluntary association of men is not the necessary association of bees. Men having associated together voluntarily, there was, therefore, an explicit or implied social contract; and this contract, immutable in its principles, and always modifiable in its applications, is, or should be, at once the work of human liberty and the manifestation of those eternal laws of justice and reason which man has not created, and cannot change.

The most ancient and the only natural society, pursues Rousseau, is that of the family. Here, again, the domain of agreements appears from the first step. As soon as man attains the age of reason, he alone being the judge of the means suited to self-preservation, thereby becomes his own master; and, if the children that have become men continue to remain united with the father, it is no longer naturally or through necessity, but voluntarily. If, therefore, the permanence of the family itself is already a fact of will and moral order, by much greater reason is it impossible for society to have any other origin than free agreements. Force, being the antipodes of right, cannot found social right. Even though it be admitted that a people can alienate itself to a king or a dynasty, neither can this be the origin of society: for a people to be able

Digitized by Google

to alienate itself, it is necessary that the people should first exist. The law of the plurality of votes, by virtue of which it is claimed that a people can give itself away, is itself an agreement, and supposes, once at least, unanimity. What is the motive power of this first agreement by which a people is a people?

This motive power is "the (moral, and not physical) necessity of associating together for the purpose of overcoming the obstacles which, in the state of Nature, are injurious to the preservation of man."

This is no longer the paradoxical hypothesis or bitter language of the *Dissertation on Inequality:* it is no longer the choler of the misanthrope, but the wisdom of the sage, that speaks.[1]

The problem of the *Social Contract* is "to find a form of association which will defend and protect with all the common power the person and property of each associate, and by which each one, uniting with all, will, nevertheless, obey none but himself, and remain as free as before. The *Social Contract* gives the solution. The clauses of this contract, although they may have never perhaps been formally enunciated, are everywhere tacitly admitted and recognized, until the social compact has been violated. As a matter of course, they are reduced to a single one,—the total alienation of each associate with all his rights to the whole community," and the reciprocal engagement of the public with private individuals.

Is the man, therefore, wholly absorbed by the citizen?

It is indispensable to study Rousseau's idea well before judging it.

There is a first reservation which it is scarcely necessary to point out when the author of the *Savoyard Vicar's Confession of Faith* is in question. The individual can only alienate to the community the rights which he possesses. He has not a right to transgress the eternal laws,—the laws of the conscience. Society has not a right, therefore, to prescribe any thing to him contrary to these laws: such a prescript would be the most scandalous violation of the social contract; and the individual remains, therefore, in the tribunal of the conscience, the judge of society itself.

Now, what is the nature of the sovereignty attributed to the re-

[1] See *ante*, p. 65, *et seq.* "Instead of destroying the natural equality, the fundamental compact substitutes, on the contrary, a moral and legitimate equality for the physical inequality caused by Nature among men. . . . Unequal as they may be in strength or genius, they all become equal by agreement and law." — *Contrat social*, liv. i. ch. viii.

Digitized by Google

public or body politic, that public person formed by the union of all the rest? The point in question is not, need we repeat, absolute sovereignty, which can be only in God, but a relative and purely political sovereignty. Is this sovereignty exercised, in general and in particular, over all the acts of the life of all and each? No. The social compact gives indeed to the body politic an absolute power over all its members in the sense that the sovereign or the collective being is the sole judge of the sacrifices which it imposes on its members for the common interest: the country has a right to oblige all the citizens to sacrifice their affections, their property, and their lives, for its safety; but the general will should be general in its object as in its essence: in other terms, the sovereign can manifest himself only through the laws, and the law is what is made by the people when the whole people decrees concerning the whole people. The sovereign can only decree concerning particular facts or persons. If a particular fact is in question, it is then merely a matter of litigation, in which the individuals interested are one party, and the public, with the exception of these individuals, the other party. The sovereign can neither favor nor wrong an individual. The sovereign can impose nothing by name upon an individual.[1] "A single act of evident injustice done to an individual would dissolve the social compact in rigorous justice, and if regard were not had for human weakness. Are we told that it is well that one should perish for all? I admire this sentence from the lips of a worthy and virtuous patriot, who voluntarily and through duty devotes himself to death for the safety of his country; but, if it is meant that the government shall be permitted to sacrifice an innocent man for the safety of the multitude, I hold this maxim as one of the most execrable ever invented by tyranny, and the most directly opposed to the fundamental laws of society."

Helvetius had written, "Every thing becomes lawful and even virtuous for the public safety." Rousseau makes the comment, "The public safety is nothing if all the private individuals are not in safety."[2] It may be judged whether it is to Rousseau, or to the

[1] If the State needs the land of a private individual, it cannot take it from him by an act of sovereignty: it may expropriate it by an administrative act by virtue of the supremacy of public property over private property, but in consideration of an indemnity; and it does not belong to the State to fix this indemnity itself, since it is here a party, and not a sovereign unit. The indemnity should be fixed by arbiters.

[2] *Mélanges: Réfutation du livre de l'Esprit.* The preceding passage is extracted from the article *Économie politique* of the *Enclyclopédie*, which is, in part, the outline of the *Contrat Social*. Rousseau, in the *Lettres de la Montagne*, forcibly protests against arbitrary

Digitized by Google

school which he so much opposed, that the responsibility should be imputed of the interpretation given in our tempestuous times to the doctrine of the public safety. If the disciples themselves of Rousseau, hurried away by the excess of passion and danger, practised the maxims which he condemned, he cannot be justly blamed for it.

We admit, nevertheless, that this second reservation, however important it may be, is not and cannot be sufficient. The absorption of the man by the citizen being laid down as a principle, the rights of the human person cannot be sufficiently protected. The sovereign, such as he is defined by Rousseau, cannot specially wrong any individual; but he may wrong liberty in general. "The sovereign," replies Rousseau, "being formed only of the individuals that compose him, neither has nor can have interests contrary to theirs." It is true that the general will is always right when it is really general; but it may be stifled, as Rousseau admits, by private wishes, when it is formed of private cliques, of special interests, in the general community, and when the moral unity is lost. Moreover, the principle itself of Rousseau must be rejected so far as it is exclusive: one does not alienate himself entire; he alienates only a portion of himself to the community. The sovereignty of the people is nothing but the individual sovereignty multiplied by itself: the sovereignty of each one, or liberty, is limited only by the sovereignty of others, or equality. In every collective decision, human imperfection not permitting the attainment of the true expression of sovereignty by unanimity, but only the very imperfect approximation to it by a majority, individual liberty, true sovereignty, is not therefore insured, unless the rights of the majority are limited expressly by the consecration of imprescriptible individual rights,—the right to go and come, the right to labor, the right of property, the right of communicating one's thoughts to his fellows, liberty of conscience with all its consequences, and family rights.[1] Only the public safety, which can never authorize the unjust sacrifice of a human person, may legitimize the momentary suspension of certain individual rights in the extreme case, when, the country's existence being threatened

imprisonment, and censures Geneva for being too much occupied with "the authority of the people in general, and not enough with liberty."

[1] The difficulty is in the limit between these individual rights and the collective right; but this difficulty exists everywhere in the world, which is nothing but an assemblage of principles limiting each other. To cite only one example: in the matter of education, the sectarians who deny the right of the family in the name of the State, or the right of the State in the name of the family, are equally in the wrong.

Digitized by Google

from without, the normal laws of peace are suspended for the exceptional laws of defensive warfare.

The question of property offers the most important application of the principles which we have just discussed. Rousseau asserts that lawful property was born of the social contract. "By the transition from the state of nature to the civil state, . . . possession, which is merely the effect of force or the right of the first occupant, becomes property founded on a positive title." Born of society, property may, according to him, be abrogated by society, which has no right to touch the possessions of one or several citizens, but which may lawfully seize upon the possessions of all by changing the bases of the social organization, "as was done in Sparta in the days of Lycurgus."[1] Right existed before law, it may be answered: property was lawful before being legal. It is true, that, in point of fact, landed property originated among us long after society; but it might have been precisely the reverse. Suppose that a man had occupied alone, by uninterrupted cultivation, a space of ground corresponding to his needs and those of his family, would he not already have had a true right to it before any contract between him and other men? But without longer disputing the origin, even if it be admitted that the right of property was born of society, does it follow that society could abrogate it by the decision of a majority of votes? Rousseau himself tacitly retracted this assertion, the most perilous that escaped his pen. In a subsequent work, which is, in many respects, the corrective of the *Social Contract*, as the latter is that of the *Dissertation on Inequality*, the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, he acknowledges that unanimity is requisite in order to touch the fundamental laws that are connected with the existence of the social body, while a strong majority is sufficient for the purpose of changing political forms. The fundamental law, *par excellence*, as he says in twenty places, is the law of property. Should all the citizens, therefore, except a single one, desire to put their property in common, the right of the single opponent must be respected. Moreover, unanimity itself could not change the nature of things; it might indeed modify and restrict the objects to which property is applied; it might take away the soil, for instance, but not abolish the right of property in its essence: the latter would constantly spring up anew.[2]

[1] See *Émile*, liv. v., more explicit than the *Contrat Social*.

[2] It must not be believed from the preceding that community of property was the social ideal of Rousseau. The best social state was, in his sight, that in which all had

Digitized by Google

There are rights, therefore, both of the conscience and of nature, which the sovereign cannot abolish, because they have not been instituted by him, but by another, — the eternal and absolute Sovereign; but all the laws that the sovereign has made he can unmake. Rousseau is here wholly in the right when he proclaims sovereignty inalienable. "No one is bound by engagements made with himself." This maxim of civil right is applied to the body politic as well as to individuals. The sovereign cannot impose laws which he has not a right to revoke.[1] The institution of the government is not a contract between the sovereign and his delegates. The sovereign does not contract; he decrees. A people that should promise unreservedly to obey a man would become dissolved by this act. "The instant that there is a master, there is no longer a sovereign; *and the body politic is destroyed.*"

It may be remarked that the democratic axiom of Rousseau is the counterpart of the monarchical axiom of Louis XIV. "The nation in France does not *constitute a body:* the State is the King."

Sovereignty, continues Rousseau, is indivisible as well as inalienable. The sovereign, the people embodied, alone has power to make laws; but all the executive and administrative acts, even the right to declare war and conclude peace, not being laws or acts of sovereignty, may be delegated to magistrates. The sovereign can be represented only by himself: he cannot have representatives, but simple commissioners, to prepare the law. "All law that the people has not sanctioned in person is null and void."

Subsequently, in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (chap. vi.), Rousseau mitigates this absolute rigor. "The law of nature," he says, "does not permit the laws to bind any one that has not voted for them personally, *or, at least, through his representatives;*" and he admits representation, in consideration of imperative instructions and official reports. He thus becomes sufficiently practical for federative States, and there remains but a single step for him to take to include unitary States,[2] — to re-

something, and no one too much — a republic of small agriculturists. — *Contrat Social*, liv. i. ch. viii.

[1] The only obligatory acts of the sovereign are treaties with other sovereigns, other collective persons, his peers.

[2] Too full of the ideal of the antique city, he does not seem to have taken this step: at least he admits with great difficulty the existence of a great free State, only on condition that it shall have no capital. The remains of his former Utopia agree with the too real evils before his eyes to make him execrate Paris and all great cities. The

Digitized by Google

place the imperative instructions, which are contrary to the nature of these States, by frequent elections, which bring the representative before those represented, and give the latter the indirect means of sanctioning or disavowing the law.

The principle of sovereignty, he continues, is everywhere the same. Those who have sought to make a distinction between different kinds of sovereignty, have confounded sovereignty, which is a unit, with governments, which may and should differ according to times and places. The government is not the sovereign: it is only the minister of the sovereign. There is but a single good government possible for a people at one moment; but different governments may be suited to the same people at different times.

The republic is a State in which the sovereign, the people embodied, preserves its rights, and which is regulated by laws, whatever may be the form of administration.

The law being the general act by which the whole people decrees concerning the whole people, it tacitly follows, from this definition, that France had no laws, since the sovereign was not consulted thereon, but was only ruled by the decrees of an hereditary magistrate, who had usurped the exercise of the sovereignty, the legislative power.[1]

The definition of the republic, according to Rousseau, excludes no form of executive power, not even the hereditary monarchical form, with the reservation of the inalienable right of the people to remove their first magistrate: nevertheless, the monarchical republic, and the hereditary, aristocratic republic, are not good republics in his sight, as he judges the liberty of the people and the hereditability of the leaders incompatible.

It has been pretended that Rousseau admitted no lawful government but pure democracy: we have just shown that this was

contrast between the luxury of the capital and the wretchedness of the country was then even more shocking than in our days, and rendered his anger too excusable. The federative republic remained his ideal. He left a plan of federal government which a Count d'Entraigues, to whom he had intrusted it, audaciously destroyed in 1789, for fear that this work might be injurious to the monarchy. It is to be remarked that the disciples of Rousseau became for the most part, in the republic, the most violent adversaries of federalism and the supporters of the republic one and indivisible.

[1] He had at first considered England itself as not having true laws. "The English nation," he says, "is free only during the election of the members of Parliament: as soon as the election is finished, it becomes a slave again."—*Contrat Social*, liv. iii. ch. xv. He disavows this exaggeration in the *Lettres de la Montagne* and the *Gouvernement de Pologne;* and, while considering England very remote from the political ideal, he would not absolutely condemn this constitution, in which two hereditary elements hold each other in check, and in which the elective element opens and shuts the public treasury, if the elections were annual, and the suffrage universal.

Digitized by Google

not the case. It has been pretended, on the other hand, that he declared democracy impossible. He says, in fact, that *rigorously* no true democracy ever existed or ever will exist. This is because he calls here democracy, in conformity with etymology, the government in which all the people, or the greatest part of the people, directly exercise the legislative power; aristocracy, the government in which this power is exercised by a few; and monarchy, the government concentrated in the hands of a single magistrate, from whom the inferior magistrates hold their powers.[1]

It is seen that Rousseau's terms are by no means those which are commonly used, which call every constitution in which the people elect the legislative and executive powers, and can modify their laws, a democracy.

The government nearest perfection, and best adapted to realize the final end, liberty and equality, is, according to Rousseau, that in which the people exercise the legislative power (it has been seen that he ends by admitting representatives), delegate the executive to a small number of magistrates, and commission a special body (tribunes, ephori ?) with watching over the preservation of the laws, and maintaining the respective rights of the legislative and the executive. He admits, however, in the *Government of Poland*, that a great State may be obliged to concentrate the executive on a single head, even for life, provided that, in proportion as the executive is concentrated, the means are strengthened for holding it in check. The frequency of popular assemblies is the most essential of these means.[2]

The questions of political forms are greatly elaborated: the others are only indicated in the *Social Contract*. With respect to punishment and taxation, Rousseau approaches Montesquieu, but is less practical: like him, he admits the lawfulness of capital punishment (he energetically stigmatizes torture in the *Letters from the Mountain*). With respect to taxation, it is necessary to refer to the article, *Political Economy* of the *Encyclopædia*. He recommends sumptuary taxes and custom duties, and insists on progressive taxation, like Montesquieu. "He who has only

[1] Thus a republic administered by a president, who appoints the other functionaries, is to him a monarchy.

[2] There is a singular proposition in the *Contrat Social*, contradictory to all the ideas of *Émile* and to all the movement of the modern world: namely, the necessity, in the formation or *reconstruction* of a community, of a single legislator that gives himself out as inspired of Heaven; a kind of vision of Moses through Calvin, an exhumation of antiquity and mystical form of that conception which sees in society a work of art which a single man must mould in a uniform manner.

Digitized by Google

the simple necessaries of life should pay nothing at all. The taxation of him who has superfluities may, in case of need, be made to involve all that exceeds the necessaries of life." Applied to the safety of the country in peril, this principle is lawful; but, if it is undertaken to apply it to ordinary wants, the results obtained will be far remote from the idea of Rousseau, who would have gladly prevented the accumulation of wealth, but who did not desire that the rich should be despoiled.[1] Progressive taxation is the arbitrary oppression of the wealthy.

Rousseau at length arrives at the great question of *civil religion*, or religion of the State: "Never was a State founded that religion did not serve as its basis."

In antiquity, the gods and the laws, theology and public right, were identified; each people seeing in its God the personification of its nationality. Christ, in establishing his spiritual kingdom on earth, separated theology from politics: but, the empire having been transferred to the Christians, the Christianity of the popes, which sought to regain possession of the unity of power, soon took the place of the Christianity of Jesus Christ; and the kingdom of the next world again became, under a visible head, the most violent despotism in this. Meanwhile, as the prince and the civil laws subsisted side by side with it, a perpetual conflict with respect to jurisdiction rendered all good *polity* impossible in Christianity. Several nations have attempted to reëstablish unity in an inverse direction to the popes; that is, religious worship subordinated to the State; but in vain. Wherever the clergy form a body, they are masters and legislators within their domain. (This is erroneous as to England and Russia, where the clergy are truly subordinate to the State.)

There are three kinds of religion: first, the religion of the man, or internal religion, the Christianity of the gospel, true Theism, natural divine right; secondly, the religion of the citizen, political, external, and national religion, civil and positive divine right,

[1] The *Declaration of Rights*, proposed to the convention by Robespierre, but not adopted, seems to proceed from this hazardous proposition of Rousseau. Property is defined therein, "the right of enjoying that portion of goods guaranteed to us by the law." There is a remarkable passage concerning finance in the *Économie politique* of Rousseau. He shows in this why a State cannot subsist unless its revenues are unceasingly increased. "As social distinctions tend to become summed up in wealth, so the different springs of government tend to become absorbed in finance in proportion as the government grows lax. The administration of finance should labor with much more care to anticipate the wants than to increase the revenues; otherwise, in the end, the nations become involved in debt, the people are trampled upon, and the government loses all its vigor, and does little with much money."

Digitized by Google

such as was understood by the ancients; thirdly, Roman Christianity, or the religion of the priesthood, which, giving men two kinds of legislation, two countries, prevents them from being at once devout and citizens. Politically this third religion is absolutely bad. The second is politically good in certain respects, and morally bad. The first is true and holy: it is the community of souls which death itself does not disunite; but it is injurious to the social spirit by detaching the hearts of citizens from earthly things.

It seems contradictory that a true and holy religion could be injurious to society. Here is again one of the abuses of the absolute logic of Rousseau. The contradiction which he points out between Christianity and patriotism he asserts elsewhere between patriotism and humanity. Nevertheless, historically, he is not wholly wrong. Through the imperfection of our mind, almost always too feeble to embrace simultaneously the different phases of the truth, the Christian, as well as the cosmopolite, the humanitarian, as has been affirmed in our times, is too much disposed to forget the country, — the one for heaven, the other for humanity.

Rousseau appears, therefore, to judge the *religion of the man* insufficient for the State. On the other hand, in declaring the *religion of the citizen*, the religion of the State, morally bad, he seems to impose a new and most important restriction on the absorption of the man in the citizen.

What does he desire then? This: To take from antiquity the principle of civil religion, but to limit it to those general dogmas, common to all communities, the foundation of all creeds, and the necessary emanation of the human conscience; to substitute these dogmas of humanity for the local and partial dogmas which render nations inimical to each other; to found in this manner the religion of the man and that of the citizen, and to proclaim these beliefs essential in the name of the *sovereign*, — not as religious dogmas without which it is impossible to be saved in the future life, which does not concern the State, but as sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be a citizen. This *civil creed* is the common basis upon which each one can build whatever system of belief seems good to him. Sects are free; but the sovereign has a right to banish any that does not subscribe to the *civil creed*, not as impious, but as unsociable. He has even a right to pronounce the penalty of death upon any who denies after having professed it.

Digitized by Google

The highest truths are blended here with dangerous errors, proceeding from the same cause as all the errors of the *Social Contract*,— the inadequateness of the guarantees of individual liberty.

Yes: it is the right and the duty of the State to proclaim the general principles of religious morality. This right and this duty can only be denied to it by absolute *anarchy*, or by a sect which aspires to stifle all nationality under a foreign theocracy. The State should regulate legislation and instruction according to these principles; it should teach them, and put them in action: but it has not a right to impose a creed upon individuals, or to pry into consciences to know whether this is believed. It should demand an account of citizens only of their actions, and not of their beliefs. The citizen who affirms his unbelief in the general dogmas should incur no other penalty than exclusion from the functions that pertain to the teaching of these dogmas.

Rousseau would have effaced with horror the few lines unhappily borrowed from Plato on the penalty of death against Atheists, could he have discerned in the distance the scaffolds of Chaumette and Clootz!

The same principle may be applied to the banishment which he demands against *any one who dares say*, "*Outside the Church there is no salvation*," "so long as theological and civil intolerance are inseparable, and as it is impossible for those who believe in this maxim to respect the civil liberty of others, and to regard themselves as their brethren." Speculative opinions, whatever may be their consequences, are not amenable to material punishment: they should be subject only to certain exclusions pertaining to the nature of the circumstances themselves. Those, for instance, who deny the rights of the country, cannot teach the children of the country the duties of the citizen.

The political philosophy of the eighteenth century has bequeathed to us two monuments, if not equal, at least both imperishable, although imperfect, like all the works of man: the book of liberty and that of equality,—the *Spirit of Laws* and the *Social Contract*. Rousseau fell behind Montesquieu in theory on certain points: on others he outstripped him with giant strides. Above all, he tore away the veil in which the prudence of Montesquieu had shrouded itself. The questions of sovereignty and government were elucidated by him with a brilliancy that was never to become extinct. The darkness of the Bodins, the Grotiuses, the Hobbeses, and the Puffendorfs, was forever dispelled by the heir of Althusius, Spinoza, Locke, and Sidney. The sovereignty by

Digitized by Google

right and the power in fact were never more to be confounded. Rousseau and Montesquieu, so different in physiognomy, so contrary at times in details, contradicted each other at heart less than they completed each other. Parties have placed these two great names in antagonism: history should reunite them.

Until the publication of his two most important works, Rousseau had suffered only in his private affections. The day of political and religious persecution dawned on him. The government had closed its eyes to the bold sayings of the *Héloïse*. Personages of high rank and probity, who thought that they saw in the new religious philosophy the safety of society, had believed themselves able to reassure Rousseau equally with respect to *Émile*,—the Marshal de Luxembourg, who offered Rousseau a sincere friendship in the place of those he had lost; a prince of the blood, Conti, who sought, in communion with serious literature, some food for the activity of a mind fitted for great political employments; and the very magistrate charged with the censorship, M. de Malesherbes. The latter went so far as to oblige Rousseau to print *Émile* in France; while the *Social Contract*, like the preceding works of Rousseau, was printed in Holland.

The *Social Contract* appeared at the beginning of 1762. Its circulation was at first tolerated. *Émile* followed a few weeks after. The first impression of the public was astonishment and uncertainty: such a monument is not measured at the first glance. Profound admiration and bitter criticism broke forth at once. While the dogmatic materialists affected a disdain which ill concealed their anger, the sceptical D'Alembert, malevolent towards Rousseau, but judicious before every thing, avowed that this book placed Rousseau *at the head of all writers*. The question was not left to the discussion of public opinion, and the hopes of Rousseau's protectors were disappointed. The court and the parliament, at the moment when they were overthrowing the Jesuits, after sudden changes to which we shall hereafter recur, thought it incumbent on them to show no more consideration to the writers who attacked the Roman religion. Rousseau, through a principle well worthy of respect,[1] had always signed his works, instead of shielding himself, like Voltaire and others, by anonymousness or transparent pseudonymes, and furnishing a pretext to the government to spare the author while prohibiting the works. His friends were powerless to protect him. The Prince de Conti could not prevent a writ from being issued against him, and only prevailed

[1] "Vitam impendere vero."

Digitized by Google

on the government to close its eyes to his flight. Rousseau decided to go solely to avoid compromising his host, the Marshal de Luxembourg (June, 1762). He retired to Yverdun, in Switzerland, to await what might be done at Geneva. *Émile* was burned, and a writ issued against the author at Geneva as at Paris! An insincere reaction of Calvinistic orthodoxy among the pastors and elders, for the most part Socinian at heart, diguised the rancor of the Genevese patricians against the *citizen* who reminded the democracy of its rights. Rousseau, as he had predicted, found himself alone before the attack of a double storm, between the champions of official religion and those of materialism.

Expelled from the territory of Vaud by the oligarchs of Berne, he took refuge in the estates of Frederick II., at Motiers, in the principality of Neufchâtel, and was able to breathe there for some time under the protection of the philosopher-monarch. It was there that he received news of his condemnation by the Sorbonne, with a mandate ably written against him, in the name of the Archbishop of Paris, by an ecclesiastic of some talent. His answer was a masterpiece, — the *Letter to M. de Beaumont*, the complement of the *Savoyard Vicar* (November, 1762). During the interval, weary of waiting in vain for his fellow-citizens to protest against the arbitrary conduct of the Genevese council with respect to him, he abdicated his right of citizenship; thus making use of that extreme right of renouncing his country which seems to us legitimate only in two cases, — when the conscience is violated, or subsistence is impossible.[1] Geneva then felt, too late, of what an aureola she had despoiled herself. Public opinion was aroused; and the polemic which took place on this narrow stage, become so celebrated for the second time within two centuries, brought forth the *Letters from the Mountain*, the supplement and corrective of *Émile*, and especially of the *Social Contract* (1764).[2]

Here stopped that torrent of elcquence and passion which had flowed without interruption during nearly fifteen years, and of which the *Letter to the Archbishop of Paris*, and the *Letters from*

[1] Rousseau, so firm with respect to the duties of the citizen, perhaps too easily admits the power of renouncing this title, by reason of his opinion concerning the wholly voluntary nature of the social compact: he does not see clearly enough that God gives us a country as he gives us a father. It is useless to observe that he interdicts our quitting the country when it has need of us. — *Contrat social*, liv. xiii. ch. viii.

[2] In Letter vii. is found the passage so often quoted: "When will men feel that there is no disorder so fatal as the arbitrary power by which they think to remedy it? This power is itself the father of all kinds of disorder: to employ such a means to prevent them is to kill men that they may not have the fever."

Digitized by Google

the Mountain, were the last gush. Rousseau resolved to publish nothing more during his life, but, happily, not to write nothing more. He believed that he had paid his debt to his contemporaries, and projected employing his last years in a work without a model, at least among moderns; and which would serve as moral proofs of his works and commentaries upon them before posterity.

He would have gladly ended his life in contemplation and peaceful revery in the recesses of the valleys of the Jura, or on some solitary island of the lakes of Roman Switzerland. His unworthy companion did not permit him to realize his wishes. Thérèse, who was weary of solitude, took advantage of the distrustful disposition of his wounded soul to make him believe in imaginary dangers, — in a persecution on the part of Protestant bigots. He quitted the country, with a broken heart, and a mind beset with a dark melancholy. He determined to accept the offers of the Scotch philosopher Hume, and to settle in England, despite the little sympathy with which the English people inspired him. He passed through France under the ban of the decree of the parliament; and the welcome which he received at Strasburg, then at Paris, was calculated to revive his affection for the French. The minister Choiseul, who neither wished to support him nor to cause his arrest, obliged him to hasten his departure. He crossed the Channel in January, 1766.

The fatal issue of this journey is well known. Rousseau was condemned to pass through three degrees of suffering, — after private sorrows, public persecution; after real persecution, imaginary evils, the most cruel of all. Perhaps the climate of England, that foggy land of spleen, contributed to induce the outbreak of the hypochondria which had been already prognosticated by many symptoms not understood. The moral malady that attacked Jean-Jacques manifested itself under a form which may be styled the mania of distrust. A few thoughtless acts of Hume were transformed, in the mind of the exile, into a plot to destroy and dishonor him. Hume, astonished and indignant, hastened, without more examination, to denounce Rousseau as a monster of ingratitude, and found only too many echoes among the former friends of the author of *Émile*, who would have pardoned Rousseau his fame, but who did not pardon him his principles. They confounded him with the defenders of *superstitions*, and called him *the deserter of philosophy*, at the moment when he was saving philosophy. Voltaire, at first touched by Rousseau's misfortunes, then strengthened in his aversion by some attacks of the *Letters*

Digitized by Google

from the Mountain, joined the atheistic party in overthrowing him, with all the impetuosity of his character. The unhappy Jean-Jacques saw a league formed against him, which was too real, but which his imagination swelled to gigantic and impossible proportions. He fancied himself to be surrounded with a universal conspiracy, into which his enemies had drawn the whole contemporaneous generation, to degrade his character, and blight his memory before posterity. Far from exaggerating his influence, he exaggerated his isolation in the midst of his age; he did not hear the numerous echoes that replied to his voice, or believed them deceitful and scoffing;[1] he disbelieved the sincerity of the greater part of the ardent disciples that flocked to him; and did not taste the highest consolation, to a heart like his, of enjoying the good that he had done to men.[2] This was, doubtless, a harsh expiation of the faults that he might have committed in this world.

On his return to France (1767), where the decree which remained standing against him was neither revoked nor applied, and where the government no longer thought of molesting him, he lived three years in the country under an assumed name; then returned openly to Paris to justify himself in person against the imputations of his enemies, and to contend against what he termed

[1] On his return from England, Amiens gave him a triumphal reception: the municipal authorities wished to send him *the wine of the city*. He was touched at first; then, on reflecting upon this welcome, he imagined that they had derided him.

[2] The origin of the melancholy of Jean-Jacques dated far back. His former friends, become his enemies, cited, as proofs of selfishness, ingratitude, falsity, and lying exaggeration, many incidents which only indicate the over-excitement of a soul placed outside the ordinary relations of life, and incapable of judging them in the common point of view. What would a being whose senses were ten times more delicate and irritable than ours do and experience in the midst of the physical world in which we live? He would endure continual and insupportable sufferings: the least ray of light would dazzle his eyes; the least touch would agitate all his nerves. Such was Rousseau in the moral world. If his sensibility had been restrained and moderated by a different education, he would have still been unhappy (beings too powerfully endowed with passion and ideality are necessarily unhappy here on earth); but he would have only felt great and inevitable sorrows, and would not have been tortured by those fantastic miseries of momentary recurrence which ended by irrevocably destroying the balance of his faculties. A touching letter, of March, 1768, attests that he had at times the consciousness of this abnormal situation. "Whatever affection may happen to my brain, my heart will always remain the same." Later, he acknowlegded to a friend, Corancez, who has left us the best account that we possess of his last years, that he had quitted England in a veritable fit of madness. Believing himself pursued in England by the agents of the minister Choiseul, it was in France that he took refuge! This mental crisis cost posterity an edition of *Émile* revised and enlarged, together with a work on public education. Rousseau burned the manuscript in a transport of causeless fear. Physical sufferings of the kind best fitted to affect the nervous system, and continued sleeplessness, had coöperated with moral causes to induce hypochondria.

Digitized by Google

the *great plot;* bringing with him the documents of the suit destined for future generations,—the manuscript of the *Confessions*. The morbid state which disturbed the rectitude of his judgment concerning particular things, while leaving him the most admirable lucidity concerning things in general, and the resolution to show himself unveiled, to tell every thing, thoughts and words, actions and relations, executed to the letter, explain and excuse, without justifying, the few useless and repulsive details that offend decency and good taste, — the revelations of the weaknesses of others; the complaisance with which the imagination of the penitent revives the remembrance of errors which the conscience disavows; and, lastly, that pride which exalts itself, under the oppression of misfortune and human injustice, so far as to defy before God any of his fellow-creatures to dare to call themselves better than he.[1] There would be temerity in undertaking to characterize, in a literary point of view, the inconceivable magic of this creation in which Rousseau is at once the poet and the poem. No one had ever written, no one perhaps will ever write, such Memoirs!

We will return again to Rousseau in his last days. We have seen his works and his life. We are about to ascertain the effects of his words; at least, the immediate effects which they produced on his contemporaries: for the ulterior consequences of these words would far exceed the limits of our history; they would exceed the generation in which we live. The action of Rousseau on France and on the world is not yet ended.

[1] It must, however, be observed, that he says *better*, and not *more virtuous*, which is quite different. It is too much forgotten that Rousseau forbade the publication of his Memoirs before the beginning of the nineteenth century; an epoch at which he had reason to believe that all his contemporaries would have disappeared. The family of Madame de Warens was completely extinct as early as 1745, and the systematic weaknesses of this strange woman had been in some sort public at Chambery.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

THE PHILOSOPHERS. (CONTINUED.)

ROUSSEAU AND THE PHILOSOPHERS. THE ECONOMISTS. Rousseau's Influence upon Writers. Voltaire modified by Rousseau. Reforms demanded by Voltaire. Voltaire and the Parliaments. Calas. Resistance of Materialistic Philosophy. Atheistic Propaganda of D'Holbach. Communism. Morelli. Mabli: his Political and Social Ideas. Rousseau's Influence on Manners and Arts. Grétri. Gluck. Louis David. Political Economy. PHYSIOCRATS. Quesnai. Gournai. TURGOT, the Economist and Philosopher.

1762–1774.

WE have attempted to describe the state of society before the coming of the philosophers, then the reign of the philosophers before the advent of Rousseau: a third period opens from the date of *Julie*, *Émile*, and the *Social Contract*. Before describing the effects upon society, upon the public, of this brilliant apparition, it is necessary to show its influence upon those very persons who were accustomed to lead public opinion, — the writers. Rousseau had fallen amidst them like a blazing projectile.

The effects produced by Rousseau on the philosophic phalanx were very different, very opposite even, but very powerful. The oscillations and modifications of the soul of Voltaire follow each other upon every page of his writings. At the very time when he expressed an increasing ill will against the person of the author of *Émile* and certain of his ideas, he was irresistibly attracted to the principal doctrines of Rousseau: he entered, as if despite himself, into paths towards which his steps were never before directed. One would say that it was to revenge himself for this salutary violence that he pursued Rousseau with blind anger. Under this passionate agitation, there was, however, a logical development in the changes wrought in Voltaire. It was not the same with Diderot, the greatest, the only great one, of the encyclopedic sect: in him the fluctuations and contradictions were redoubled. In the main body of the materialistic battalion, there were no contradictions; there was the logic of mediocrity: men vied with each other in exceeding the Atheism of the past through

Digitized by Google

the spirit of reaction. The patriarch of Ferney still had the nominal supremacy over the encyclopedic army; but this army was undisciplined: it always obeyed when it was in question to attack either positive religion or the person of Rousseau, and also, it must be acknowledged, to defend humanity; but, when the leader wished to spare Rousseau's ideas or to maintain his own Deism, his subordinates refused obedience. The religious or metaphysical ideas of Rousseau were here alone in question: as to his political ideas, all felt their influence to a very high degree; only some restricted, while others falsified or exaggerated them.

The advent and invasion of Rousseau determined therefore, in Voltaire's life, a third very fruitful phase, which it is most essential to study. In the first phase, Voltaire had had, for the foundation and support of his philosophy, the optimism of Bolingbroke. In the second, he had lost this support, without finding any other. In the third, strengthened by an assistance which he did not acknowledge, and fired by an emulation which he disguised from himself, he assimilated in part with the views of his illustrious and unhappy rival, and at the same time revived, and developed with well-sustained energy, all his own aspirations, all the ideas which rose spontaneously from the nature of his mind. The aged tree put forth anew with a wonderful power of rejuvenescence, and bore new fruits, which would perhaps have withered in the germ, had it not been for the beneficent blast which had swept over them.

An anonymous political work, the *Republican Ideas, by a Citizen of Geneva*, was the first echo of Rousseau in Voltaire. He harshly assailed the *Social Contract;* refuted it justly on some points, and wrongly on others, in which he did not understand Rousseau's true ideas, but, at the bottom, submitted to it while completing it by this great principle: "In a republic worthy of the name, the liberty of publishing his thoughts is the natural right of the citizen." To Voltaire, therefore, seems to belong the honor of having clearly formulated the liberty of the press as a fundamental right. He opposed, in the name of liberty, the sumptuary laws recommended by Rousseau; he blamed, like him, "the odious and humiliating distinction between the nobles and those not of noble birth." He had accepted the sovereignty of the people by affirming that "civil government is the will of all, executed by a single one or by several in virtue of the laws which all have enacted." But he restricted this participation of all by a singular definition of the community. "A community being composed of several houses and several pieces of ground attached

Digitized by Google

to them, it is improbable that a single man would be the master of these houses and grounds; and it is natural that each master should have a voice with respect to the good of the community. Should those who have neither house nor land in this community have a voice with respect to it? They have no more right to this than a clerk hired by merchants would have to regulate their trade; but they may be made partners."

Behold monarchy and democracy, therefore, disowned together in behalf of the republic of landed property! — society composed of houses and lands! . . . Rousseau thought society composed of men. We may see here the germ of those equivocal opinions, which, while abstractly recognizing the sovereignty of the people, systematically[1] exclude the lower classes from political rights, without alleging the motive of this exclusion as bluntly as Voltaire.

Despite this denial of the right of those who were not land-holders,[2] Voltaire, returning to the sentiments which had formerly inspired him in *Brutus* and the *Death of Cæsar*, and which he had appeared to forget for the exclusive warfare against *fanaticism*, thenceforth uttered republican maxims on many occasions. He had said, in the *Ideas of a Citizen of Geneva*, that "the republican is the most tolerable of all governments, because it is that which assimilates men most closely to natural equality." He recurred to this in the article DEMOCRACY of that *Philosophical Dictionary* by which he undertook to make up for the reticences of the *Encyclopædia*, and frankly to give the final solution concerning all kinds of subjects. "The people," he said, like Rousseau, "never desire, and never can desire, any thing but liberty and equality." He sets the crimes of monarchies in opposition to the much rarer crimes of republics. The article *Politics* of the same *Dictionary* contains a very vivid and clever allegory on the end of monarchies, — on the too harshly treated workmen, that finally expel the master. "All that I see," he says in a letter of April 2, 1764, "is sowing the seeds of a revolution which will inevitably come, but which I shall not have the pleasure of witnessing. The French arrive late at every thing; but they arrive at last. Enlightenment is becoming so widely diffused, that they will break

[1] We say *systematically*; for it is possible to admit the principle of universal suffrage, without believing it immediately applicable to all people in every state of society.

[2] Not only the common people, but capitalists and manufacturers, who are not landed proprietors.

Digitized by Google

out on the first occasion, and then there will be a charming uproar. The young men are happy: they will see fine things."

Those *fine things* of which Voltaire spoke so lightly would have inspired him with as much terror as admiration, had he been permitted to be a spectator of them. It was not in this tone that Rousseau had announced the great subversion that was in the course of preparation.

Voltaire did not always pique himself on being consistent. By the side of the republican and revolutionist, the large landed proprietor and lord of the manor broke out at times in an almost feudal caprice. "The pretended equality of men is a pernicious chimera. If there were not thirty laborers to one master, the earth would not be cultivated. I have established schools on my estates; but I distrust them." — Art. *Fertilization.*

These seigniorial fancies arrested him but little. In spite of his levity and inconsistency, he continually advanced: his ardor and activity seemed to increase with years. Rousseau had especially laid down general principles and appealed to general sentiments. Voltaire, on his side, after having so long carried on a general criticism, set about demanding reforms, some positive, others definite, and others partial, but all emanating from the same source, and tending to the same end, — the progress of humanity in the laws and the emancipation of secular society.

A young Milanese, the Marquis Beccaria, had just published, with great éclat, the *Treatise on Offences and Punishments*, the reflex of that French thought which was rapidly invading Europe.[1] Voltaire warmly welcomed and commented upon this work, which summed up, if not with profundity, at least with the truest warmth and the most sympathetic candor, all the aspirations of modern philanthropy to a more humane and juster system of legislation (1766). The experience of the aged man did not follow the youth in all his flights. Voltaire did not believe the penalty of death *absolutely* unlawful,[2] like Beccaria; but he entreated legislators to render its application as rare as possible, and to employ criminals in general upon the public works. There should be no capital punishment, he said, until after a reëxamination of the

[1] The book of Beccaria was translated and greatly changed by the Abbé Morellet, an economist and deistical philosopher, who had just published, in 1762, the *Manuel des Inquisiteurs*; thus dragging the monster of the Inquisition from his cave to hold him up to universal abhorrence.

[2] It is to be remarked that this opinion of Beccaria, which has since been so often re-echoed, was professed by none of the great geniuses of the eighteenth century.

Digitized by Google

trial in the council of the Prince. This was done in England and Germany, and was formerly done in France. The *question*, above all, the *preliminary question*, should no longer be employed. England had long since abolished it, and other States were successfully following her example.[1] Robbery by servants should no longer be punished with death, and the property of those condemned should no longer be confiscated. This was not done in the greater part of the provinces under the Roman law; neither in Bourbonnais, Berry, Maine, Poitou, nor Brittany. Voltaire attacked all the legal penalties dictated by fanaticism, the penalties against heretics, the atrocious tortures of those guilty of sacrilege, and the revolting execution of the corpses of those who had committed suicide; and casually introduced a note on an abuse foreign to legal punishment, but still more odious to humanity,—the infamous mutilation of the *Soprani* for the use of the Papal chapel. He compared our secret trials, copied from the Inquisition under François I., with the public trials of the Romans, and protested against the harsh treatment inflicted on the accused, and the injustice of granting counsel to those charged with simple misdemeanors, and refusing it to those charged with crimes. He showed that the *Criminal Ordinance* of 1670, which had greatly aggravated that of 1539, and which was the only uniform law for the whole kingdom, seemed, in many respects, to have for its aim the destruction of the accused, and not the discovery of the truth. He was indignant because the accused proved innocent was indemnified neither for his captivity nor his sufferings (after sixty years of revolution, he would still have cause for indignation). He stigmatized the vendibility of judicial office, which existed nowhere but in France; and expressed his desire for the uniformity of jurisprudence, then of legislation.[2]

Elsewhere, he eulogized the English jury,—the trial of the citizen by his peers. He had, as early as 1742, lauded the institution of justices of the peace, established in Holland.

As to his other great object, the enfranchisement of civil society,

[1] Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Hesse. In Russia, the reformation was not serious; the knout easily replacing the classic instruments of torture.

[2] To appreciate what was due to Voltaire and his devoted auxiliaries, we must remember where the most eminent among the law-makers had stood a few years before: for instance, D'Aguesseau, admitting the utility of the rack, and causing the renewal of those barbarous ordinances of the sixteenth century which condemned to death those guilty of *rape by seduction*, without distinction of sex; that is, which threatened with torture a young girl who had suffered a minor to marry her against the wishes of his parents (December 1, 1730). — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 338.

Digitized by Google

he recurred to it unceasingly in the *Philosophical Dictionary* and everywhere. He affirmed that it belonged to the State to support the ministers of religion, reserving the right of disposing of the superfluous ecclesiastical property, should there be any;[1] and that religious orders, having foreign superiors, should not be tolerated. He demanded that the secular authority should no longer interfere to enforce the observance of Lent and the abstinence from labor on feast-days. Marriage, as to its civil results, and so far as it was a contract, wills and burials, should belong to the domain of pure civil law. Separation between husbands and wives, without the power to marry again, he regarded as contrary to morality and good order.

He also instigated reforms in other matters of all kinds; in questions of municipal government and public hygiene, as the return to the ancient usage of removing cemeteries beyond the limits of cities; and in educational questions, as the introduction of historical and mathematical studies into colleges.

It suffices to sum up the propositions of Voltaire to signalize their importance. The greater part of his *desiderata* have become the laws of modern France. A few of the improvements which he solicited are yet to be established or *restored*. On the ground of civil reforms, he trod with the firmest and surest step: nothing equalled the accuracy of his perception.

The religious question is not so simply or easily judged. Here two inverse tendencies were manifested in Voltaire, — on the one hand, he became strengthened in Deism, and reconciled to the necessary beliefs which he had rejected; on the other, as if to win pardon for his *natural religion* from the materialists, he redoubled his fury against positive religion and the Bible. He did not content himself with seconding the warfare of Rousseau against the Roman religion, — a religion, he said, which, "choosing a head outside of the State, is necessarily at public or secret war with the State; a malady which must be cured by degrees by abolishing the shameful taxes paid to the Bishop of Rome, diminishing the number of convents, and suppressing, in the course of time, the fraternities, penitents, and false relics."[2] The famous watch-

[1] To judge of this system, it must be compared, not with the theory which throws the support of religious worship upon the free contribution of private individuals, but with the state of affairs when the Catholic clergy possessed a very large part of the soil of France, and tithes to the amount of ninety millions on the rest.

[2] *Idées de Lamothe-le-Vayer.* Among the defenders of the Bible and tradition, scarcely any can be cited but the Abbé Guénée, a man of wit, who employed good taste in

Digitized by Google

word, *Down with hell!* no longer threatened only fanaticism and superstition, but involved all Christianity, which Voltaire confounded with the Christian sects: he no longer even distinguished morality from dogmas; he trampled under foot the sentiments most worthy of respect, and stigmatized the most touching and the holiest traditions with a license which reminds us but too well of the author of the *Maid of Orleans.*

The excuse for such excesses, if any excuse can extenuate the blame, is the crimes by which humiliated fanaticism was striving to revenge its defeat and regain its sway. From 1762 to 1766, the old stereotyped and pitiless spirit of the courts of justice hurled defiance at the spirit of the age by a series of judicial atrocities well adapted to hurry beyond all bounds a passionate and impulsive man like Voltaire. Bigoted and frenzied minorities imposed their rule in the parliaments on wavering or sceptical majorities, and obliged them, as a compensation for the deadly warfare which the magistracy was waging at that moment against the Jesuits, to ransack the arsenal of the old laws, full of instruments of extermination, "in order to avenge religion on the heretics and the infidels." February 19, 1762, the Protestant pastor Rochette was hung, by the sentence of the parliament of Toulouse, for having exercised the evangelical ministry in Languedoc. Three young Protestant gentlemen, the brothers Grenier, were decapitated at the same time, under the pretext of rebellion, for having taken up arms at a moment when they feared being slaughtered by the Catholics, who had been roused by the sound of the tocsin on the occasion of the arrest of Rochette. March 9, 1762, another Toulouse Protestant, the merchant Calas, expired on the wheel. The parliament of Toulouse had condemned him as the assassin of his own son, who, from all appearances, had committed suicide. According to a fable borrowed by the parliaments from the gross credulity of the fraternities of penitents, Calas had killed his son to prevent him from becoming a Catholic. The widow and children of the victim, after themselves enduring the horrors of the *question*, took refuge at Geneva, and implored the pity of Voltaire. The rest is known. History cannot have too much praise for the magnaminity with which this old man, already the butt of all the clergy of Europe, dared to enter into open strife with this so-much dreaded magistracy, and forced it to recoil

erudition, and urbanity in polemics. His *Lettres de quelques Juifs*, etc., was almost the only book of talent written against Voltaire.

Digitized by Google

before him. He knew how to employ all weapons, even that of moderation, to persuade and convert the public, the bar, and the court at last. He obtained, after execution, the application of that principle of reëxamination which he demanded theoretically between condemnation and execution. An extraordinary tribunal of fifty masters of requests quashed the decree of the parliament of Toulouse, rehabilitated the memory of Calas, and prescribed the indemnification of his family (March 9, 1765). Never had truth and justice won a more brilliant or more difficult victory.

In the very year of the punishment of Calas, the same abominations had been well-nigh repeated in the same place. A young Protestant girl had been taken from her parents, according to the ordinances still in force, and shut up in a convent in order to force her to change her religion, or to *instruct her*, as it was said. She escaped, and perished by accident in her flight. The father, named Sirven, was accused of the same crime as Calas: he fled, with his wife and remaining daughter, through the snows of the Cévennes. The wife died of want and grief: the father and daughter rejoined the Calas family at Geneva. They found there the same protection, while they were condemned as contumacious at Toulouse: but their case was not so promptly settled; and, before their innocence had been judicially recognized, the parliaments had fallen.

They had first had time to sully themselves with new crimes. In 1766, a crucifix placed on a bridge at Abbeville having been mutilated during the night, the Bishop of Amiens clamored for vengeance. Two young officers of eighteen, La Barre and D'Étallonde, were accused of the sacrilege. D'Étallonde fled: La Barre was condemned by the presidial court of Abbeville, on vague presumptions, to be burned alive, after having his tongue cut out, and his right hand struck off. An appeal was made to the Parliament of Paris. The parliament confirmed the sentence, granting to the accused the favor of being decapitated! This time, Voltaire failed. La Barre's head fell July 1, 1766. The tribunals seemed struck with madness, even when passions or religious interests were not at stake. Voltaire, as we have said elsewhere, succeeded no better in wresting from them a more eminent victim, — the Count de Lally; but he paved the way for the rehabilitation of this unhappy general, and saved the life or honor of several other accused, who were on the point of succumbing beneath unjust prejudices: he seemed to aspire to constitute himself the redress-

Digitized by Google

er of all those errors and judicial acts of iniquity which so well proved the necessity of the reforms that he invoked.

He thus practised the gospel in fact while attacking it in name.

At the same time, his Deism took a more and more precise and providential character. He forcibly declared himself in favor of final causes, and opposed to naturalism. "I see in nature, as in the arts, only final causes. There is no nature; there is nothing but art." He means that God is the great Artist, and the world a work of art. (*Phil. Dict.*, art. GOD, — NATURE). He set up Spinoza himself in opposition to materialistic naturalism: it was the beginning of justice to this great man, mistaken even by Rousseau. On approaching the threshold of the future life, he inclined at last to the immortality of the soul. He admitted the possibility in us "of that indestructible monad which thinks and feels," so often the butt of his raillery. "Let us hope that our monad, which reasons upon the great Eternal Being, may be happy through this very Being."[1] He acknowledged, that, wherever there is an established society, a religion (he does not say a *religion of State*) is necessary, provided that the form of worship is simple, and the priesthood without superstition. "The laws watch over known, and religion over secret crimes." Novels and poetry, which he had often employed for aggressive criticism, became weapons in favor of his faith in Providence.[2] His voice rose, like his thought, in virile and proud epistles, the fruit of the inexhaustible inspiration of his last years.

"I dare act without fearing any thing; so dare I write."

The avenger of Calas could render to himself this noble testimony: —

"It is our hope, that, one day, all will be well:
It is our delusion that all is well to-day."

It was thus that he corrected, in the new editions, the sad conclusion of the *Disaster of Lisbon*.

His final conclusion was an act of faith in favor of the religion of progress: —

"Whether every thing is good or bad, let us act so that it may better."

[1] As early as 1758, immediately after *Candide*, he had discerned the true solution of the question of optimism. "It is the eternity to come that justifies optimism, and not the present moment," he wrote to a pastor of Geneva, summing up what Rousseau had written to him. But he had little feeling of this *eternity to come* at that epoch.

[2] See the *Hist. de Jenny*; the *Épitre à l'auteur des Trois Imposteurs*; the *Épitre à Boileau*.

Digitized by Google

It was against his usual allies that all these darts were aimed: it was against their Atheism that he protested in engraving on the fronton of the church at Ferney the famous inscription, *Deo erexit Voltaire*, in which it has been erroneously sought to discover the revelation of audacious pride.[1]

He hesitated long before waging a direct war on their works: the compact against the common enemy restrained him. They themselves, moreover, despite the fanatical anger which the attack of Rousseau had excited among them, ventured only by degrees to teach dogmatically in their books the doctrines which they had professed for so many years in their drawing-rooms. They must have felt the old world more and more shaken, and believed the power of their sect singularly increased. They needed, most of all, a strongly organized centre of action. D'Alembert was too prudent and too sceptical to create this centre: Diderot, too mobile, and also too clear-sighted, had not a firm enough faith in annihilation, and at times perceived the impossibility of an atheistic society. A man of less scope, but who joined to a passionate perseverance the conditions of fortune and position necessary to act on a large scale, took this part, — the Baron d'Holbach, a German settled in France, well instructed in the natural sciences, to the advancement of which he had been able to contribute by original views, but who made his physics only the support of a bad system of metaphysics. D'Holbach assembled around him, and set to work, men of unequal learning and talent, but associated by a like thirst for destruction and a like sincerity in their negative fanaticism. He possessed himself of Diderot, not exclusively, but at least as far as it was possible to seize upon this Proteus whom no one ever chained. The fiery director of the *Encyclopædia* wrote at once, for himself and his friends, deistical and atheistical books, — the *Additions to the Philosophical Thoughts*, and the *Treatise on the Sufficiency of Natural Religion* (1770). Still other productions of Diderot might have been acknowledged by Voltaire, if not by Rousseau himself. The *Philosophical History of the Two Indies*, by the Abbé Rainal (1770), which owed to

[1] It is to be regretted that this remembrance should be marred by the scenes, some puerile, others blameworthy, which transpired at Ferney, where Voltaire amused himself by becoming affiliated to the third order of St. Francis; pretended to receive the communion from the hands of his curate, like a good lord of the manor, despite the opposition of his bishop; and signed, to this effect, a Catholic confession of faith, in order to screen himself from the French tribunals. Rousseau did not trifle with such things!

Digitized by Google

Diderot its most highly colored pages,[1] was also a deistical work. But, meanwhile, Diderot sketched cynical fancies on his own account, and lavished his fire on the materialistic lucubrations of D'Holbach, his auxiliary Naigeon, and Helvetius, as on that correspondence by which Grimm amused seven or eight foreign princes with the panorama presented by literary and philosophic France: inexhaustible and indefatigable, he wrote almost every thing of superiority in the books of his friends, — a strange man, who cannot be accused of bad faith, but who had the perilous gift of becoming enamoured in an artistic point of view with contradictory ideas, according as they succeeded to the surface of his mind.

A multitude of aggressive books issued from the secret laboratory of D'Holbach, in order to go to Holland to be printed; then to return to be burned in France, where the flames were no longer any thing but a means of propagation.[2] These were reputed to be the posthumous works of divers scholars or academicians, who, it was said, had not dared to reveal their thoughts during their lifetime: the principal ones were ascribed to the most profound scholar of the age, Nicolas Fréret, who had died in 1749. The first of these works being especially directed against the revealed dogmas, Voltaire approved them, despite their suspicious tendencies. A learned and laborious, but heavy theologian, who defended the old maxims of intolerance with the dogmas of Christianity, — the Abbé Bergier, — replied to one of these books, the *Critical Examination of the Apologists of Christianity*, by the *Certainty of the Proofs of Christianity;* to which a new champion replied by the *Certainty of the Proofs of Mahometanism*. The latter, a Gallicized German like D'Holbach and Grimm, was that Clootz, afterwards celebrated in the Revolution under the name of Anacharsis, a disciple of Diderot, who was destined to fall under the blows of the disciples of Rousseau when ideas became swords.

The *System of Nature* at last removed all disguise (1770): it was the theory, magisterially set forth, of that materialistic naturalism insinuated in the *Interpretation of Nature*, and some other previous works of Diderot, and refuted by Rousseau. At this stroke, Voltaire broke forth. For the first time, he publicly con-

[1] The vast work of Rainal, too much lauded formerly, and too much disdained at the present time, is diffuse, declamatory, and sometimes inconsistent, but full of facts, and animated with a sincere earnestness.

[2] Twenty-five or thirty were burned in 1770. — See the curious report on Fréret, to the Academy of Inscriptions, by M. Walckenaër.

Digitized by Google

demned a production emanating from the philosophical fraternity, and found himself ranged, willing or unwilling, by the side of the author of *Émile*.

These same books, so hostile to the religion of Rousseau, felt the influence of his politics, while setting out from principles so different. Rousseau having condemned all monarchical or aristocratic institutions which disregarded the rights of the people, it was necessary to find means of surpassing him. He had given reasons: they resorted to declamations.[1] There was a rival clamor against despotism, the diapason of which continued to increase till it reached the savage distich of Diderot: —

> "And my hand will rend the entrails of the priest,
> In default of a rope to strangle the kings!"

A dithyrambic frenzy, which did not prevent the *tyrannicide* Diderot from professing a naïve admiration for Catharine II., the philosopher-Empress, whom he went to Russia to visit, and who loaded him with calculated caresses and benefactions.

We meet in a posthumous work of Diderot (the *Politics of Sovereigns*, written in 1774, but not published until 1798) passages more serious and reflective than this savage sally of a philosophic supper.

"Under any government whatsoever, the only means of being free is for all to be soldiers. In each condition, it is necessary for the citizen to have two dresses, — the dress of his vocation, and the military dress."

This was the announcement of the institution of the National Guard.

"There are no effective remonstrances but those which are made with the bayonet at the end of the musket."

And, lastly, that terrible saying, which contained a lugubrious prophecy, —

"THE PUBLIC PUNISHMENT OF A KING CHANGES THE SPIRIT OF A NATION FOREVER."

It was the substitution of revolutionary reasons of State for monarchical and catholic reasons of State. Rousseau would have said at least, "The punishment of a *guilty* king."

The distich was not published, any more than the axioms; and

[1] Not that there are not in these books "some true principles of public right and liberty," as is acknowledged by an historian who cannot be suspected of favoring materialism, M. Villemain; but these principles, devoid of consistency and authority, could not constitute a doctrine.

Digitized by Google

Catharine, moreover, esteemed her *moujiks* in little danger from the preachings of the French propaganda. Another monarch judged them less inoffensive, — Frederick II. He seconded his old friend Voltaire, and composed a refutation of the *System of Nature* from the stand-point of Deism, and even of free-will, which he had formerly opposed. It was well to interfere thus as a philosopher, and not as a king; but it may be guaranteed, that, at the bottom, the king had been more deeply wounded than the philosopher by a book which claimed the right of subjects to depose their princes, and the abolition of the great armies which support the thrones. Frederick had already found himself far outstripped by Rousseau; although he himself had appeared to assert, in a theoretical work, the superiority of the republic over the monarchy.[1] He who had so noisily commenced the philosophic revolution among the crowned heads well-nigh commenced the reaction; or at least he paused, if he did not draw back, while the movement extended to the courts of Russia and Italy, Austria and Spain, and the court of Rome itself!

The movement in the courts could extend only within certain limits; but the writers had exceeded all bounds: after particular religions, they had attacked natural religion; after the transient forms of society, they attacked its foundation. A book, the *Code of Nature*, which has been attributed to Diderot, although his ideas are not found therein any more than his style, denounced property, no longer as allied to society substituted for savage independence, but as having overthrown the true system of society, *communism*, the providential law of human sociability. The true author, who lived in great obscurity, was named Morelli. He was a solitary dreamer, far removed from all practical sense, as is attested by the simplicity of his book; but the scope of this book greatly exceeds its intrinsic value, although every thing in it is not to be despised. It is the starting-point of Babeuvism, of modern communism, and all the systems founded exclusively upon the principle of fraternity. The communist theory, the successor of the Franciscans of the Middle Ages and the Utopian philosophers of the sixteenth century, did not proceed from materialism, although it had power to become a formidable scourge by combining with it. Morelli was religious: he professed the providential perfectibility of the physical and moral worlds; he laid down as the principle of all moral development the sentiment of our indi-

[1] He gives a very remarkable reason for this; namely, that there is more consistency and unity in the policy of republics.

Digitized by Google

vidual insufficiency; of the need that we have of others, and consequently of *beneficence;* and showed the idea of *beneficence*, of goodness, raised to the highest degree, awakening in us the notion of the Divinity rather and more surely than the spectacle of the universe itself. He greatly eulogized primitive Christianity, and discerned very clearly that the tendency to communism existed therein, but saw less clearly why it had ceased to exist. The tendency to absolute unity and social equality is an inevitable reaction of the human mind in the decline of civilization, where extreme inequality is associated with extreme corruption; but this tendency is moderated and counterbalanced by other forces when society becomes reëstablished. The Christians would have abandoned the system of communism, even if the Church had not deviated from the evangelical spirit, as Morelli reproaches it for doing.

The reason is, that liberty, the free disposal of one's self, the most unconquerable of all the wants of man, and the great motive power of all progress and all activity, is incompatible with that universal system of regulation in which communism necessarily ends, and which was already completely formulated in the *Code* of Morelli, in which was found, almost in the very terms, the famous axiom, *from each according to his faculties, to each according to his needs;* an ideal to which it is quite right to aspire, but which cannot be made a positive law, an executory law, without annihilating all personality under the despotism of the magistrate. The doctrine is also found therein, that all evil arises from the existing institutions of society, and that all evil would disappear if the social institutions were reformed; a doctrine which abolishes individual responsibility, and differs totally from that of Rousseau: the author of *Émile* wished to reform men in order to reform society. Again: it is endeavored therein to combine the abolition of all property with the maintenance of social progress in the arts, sciences, pleasures, and conveniences of life, and also with the maintenance of the family. Morelli even causes all grades of society to be ruled by heads of families; and, if he admits of divorce, it is not without harsh restrictions.

The transition is natural from Morelli to an intermediate philosopher between him and Rousseau, and who, almost as devoid of literary talent as the author of the *Code of Nature*, elevated himself to a high renown by mere strength of thought, and, above all, of character. The Abbé de Mabli,[1] the rival and not the disciple of Rousseau, advancing side by side with the *citizen*

[1] The brother of Condillac, born in 1710.

Digitized by Google

of Geneva, seconded him against materialism and monarchy, completed him on certain points, and exaggerated, restricted, or falsified him on others. He had begun his career, as early as 1740, by a book in which he extolled the lustre of modern civilization, and set the society of his time above the ancients. His idea became voluntarily and conscientiously transformed. He published two works on the public law of Europe, and aspired to found international policy upon morality and justice. To be consistent, moreover, he quitted active diplomacy, in which he had had prospects of success (1748–1757). His *Observations on the Greeks and Romans* (1749–1751) taught maxims concerning simplicity, poverty, and rigid morals, which had been those of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, and which were becoming those of Rousseau. We remark therein the axiom, "Equality is the only solid principle of liberty." In 1758, he wrote a treatise on *Rights and Duties*, so vigorous, so original, and so prophetic, that, published after the author's death, in the midst of the Revolution (1789), it seemed a book written for the occasion.

The political principles of this were those of Rousseau. Mabli was even more absolutely opposed to all magistracy, hereditary, or even for life; but the great interest of the book was in its applications. Mabli affirmed that the citizen has a right, in every state, to aspire to the government best fitted to secure the public happiness, which it is his duty to labor to establish. He set out from this to draw up a true manual for the use of revolutions. Men should pass, he affirmed, by degrees, from the monarchy to the republic. The first means is to become enlightened. All agitation benefits liberty, if the nation is enlightened; or despotism, if it is ignorant and brutalized. We are not to do like those men who become terrified at the slightest movement in the body politic, and aspire only to a repose which is the moral death of this body. Civil war itself is preferable to despotism. The English are to pass from the mixed monarchy to the republic. They failed by going too fast under Cromwell: they did too much in 1640, and not enough in 1688. The French should begin by establishing their ancient States-General. There should be no partial reforms, which would not touch the principle of the evil, royal despotism, and which would abolish those secondary forces, — those corporations and privileges, bad in themselves, but useful temporarily in maintaining some points of resistance against despotism.

He did not see that these privileges serve as props to royalty while resisting it, and that despotism, once isolated, would fall

Digitized by Google

more easily; but he speedily became again surprisingly clear-sighted. After urging the parliament and all the bodies and orders to defend what remained to them, and to strive to recover what they had lost, not for their interest, but as an example to the people, he affirmed that the parliament might become the great instrument of liberty. The parliament should have (in 1756) "acknowledged that it had exceeded its powers in consenting to new taxes, and have asserted the principle that the nation alone has a right to impose them; have drawn an historical picture of the usurpations of kings; and have demanded, in consequence, the holding of the States-General. . . . You would have seen the prodigious effect that such remonstrances would have made upon the public. Your most obscure bourgeois would have suddenly been regarded as citizens, the parliament would have seen itself seconded by all the orders of the State, and a general cry of approbation would have thrown the court into consternation. . . . These opportunities will return."

These were not conjectures: it was history written in advance.

Mabli was convinced that the parliament would come to the point of demanding the States-General, however jealous of them it might be. His *second-sight* abandoned him, inasmuch as he did not foresee, thirty years in advance, the force and audacity with which the Third Estate would abolish the privileged orders, and, with much greater reason, the parliament itself. He believed that the parliament would lead the States by placing itself at the head of the Third Estate. He drew a plan of progressive reformation, whereby royalty would be reduced almost to the part assigned to it by the constitution of 1791, and would even be deprived of the greater part of the official appointments, but whereby privileged persons would preserve their rank as individuals, if not as separate orders, in the periodical States-General. "It is necessary," he said, "to strengthen anew, and reconstruct by degrees, an enervated and corrupt people."

Mabli then made a new digression into antiquity by the *Conversations of Phocion* (1763); a book which contrasts somewhat strangely with the *Treatise on Rights*, and which belongs wholly to the past, as the latter does to the future,[1] save on the question of the harmony that should be established between patriotism and humanity. Mabli was here in advance of Rousseau, although

[1] He professes therein the exclusive and absolute adoration of the ancients, and expresses a wholly *antique* contempt for artisans and mercenaries: like Voltaire, he wishes no one but *land-owners* to be permitted to exercise political rights.

Digitized by Google

he did not yet possess those precise ideas concerning nationalities which no one possessed in the eighteenth century, and which are forged only in the fire of battles.

He soon returned to his great idea of urging the reëstablishment of national assemblies, and sought to give the support of history to the democratic theory. From this proceeded the *Observations on the History of France*, a work in which a new interpretation replaced the ideas of Boulainvilliers, Dubos, and Montesquieu, by taking from each of the preceding systems whatever it contained in favor of free institutions.[1] Mabli did not know how to go back to our true origin, the Celtic world, as was to be done during the Revolution with more instinct than science. He was led into many illusions by the preconceived determination to discover the national unity and the general assemblies of the people in ages when the nationality did not exist; when there were Franks and Gallo-Romans, but no Frenchmen. He did not see that the nation proper was formed only by the social movement from the eleventh to the twelfth centuries. The contemporaneous generation did not look so closely. Morally freed from the chains of the past, accustomed by its masters to judge traditions from the height of its reason, it no longer felt the need of supporting its doctrines by historical proofs: nevertheless, it joyfully welcomed the aid which it received; and the impulse of public opinion in favor of Mabli was such, that professional scholars dared not even dispute the most erroneous parts of his system.[2]

[1] 1765–1788. — Upon these *Observations*, etc., see Aug. Thierry, *Considérations sur l'Hist. de France*, ch. iii.; *Œuvres complètes*, t. VII. p. 81.

[2] The great erudite publications, the legacies of preceding generations, were pursued with perseverance, without exciting much interest in a public preoccupied with more exciting questions. Another monument of Benedictine learning, the *Art de vérifier les dates* (1st ed. 1749, 2d ed. 1770), worthily closes the long series of the works of these learned congregations, about to disappear with the ancient system of society. Some secular scholars, at the head of whom must be placed Lacurne de Sainte-Palaie, were beginning to investigate with curiosity the primitive monuments of chivalry and the poetry of the Middle Ages, buried for centuries under imitations which had caused the original to be forgotten. The *Cabinet des Chartes* was founded in 1762 by Bertin, the minister of the King's household, for the purpose of assembling all the monuments of royal, seigniorial, and municipal legislation, scattered among the public and private archives; and Brequigni commenced, with La Porte du Theil, the *Collection de Diplômes, Chartes*, etc., interrupted by the Revolution, and resumed in 1832. Father Lelong, of the Oratory, had undertaken in 1719, under the title *Bibliothèque historique de la France*, the general catalogue of the documents relative to our history: this immense work was completed by Fevret de Fontette (1768). Writers of great learning, De Guignes and Lebeau, the one in his *Histoire des Huns*, the other in his *Histoire de Bas-Empire*, studied the obscure ages in which the invasion of the barbarians of Europe and Asia subverted and reconstructed the world. The *Histoire de France*,

Digitized by Google

It was in *Legislation*, published in 1776, that Mabli summed up his whole theory. His Utopian ideal was closely allied to that of Morelli. If he did not absolutely condemn all property, he attacked landed property as being the principle of social inequality, and did not perceive that this inequality, at least within certain limits, preceded the partition of lands. He fancied, like Morelli, the system of communism to have been organized in primitive society; and his arguments on the possibility of this society, and the employment of the point of honor as the stimulus and recompense of labor, instead of material advantages, are the source of all that has been written in our times upon the same theme. The chief difference is that he did not hope that property, once rooted by time, could be abolished. He agreed with Rousseau in acknowledging that legislators should thenceforth cause it to be respected as sacred, in order to avoid greater evils, and even the destruction of society. He did not believe, above all, that absolute equality could be associated with the enjoyments of refined civilization.[1] Far from it: in order to approach this equality as closely as possible, he deemed it necessary to simplify public manners extremely, to reduce the public treasury and the expenditures, to extend everywhere the network of sumptuary laws, and to fetter and diminish commerce and manufactures.[2]

Among many impracticable propositions, or incompatible with individual liberty, he expressed views, some at least specious, others sound and fruitful, which have since been realized in part. He desired the assistance of the State against accidents of Nature (a kind of national mutual insurance), *the equality of inheritance*

lightly undertaken by the Abbé Velli, although continued with more serious studies by Villaret and Garnier, erred too much in its foundation to be ranked in the same category. We must not forget, in the annals of erudition, the president De Brosse, of the parliament of Dijon, who was not only a profound scholar, but a writer of the rarest and most original talent, too little read at the present time. — See the interesting pages devoted to him by M. Villemain, *Tableau de la Littérature française au dix-huitième siècle* part I. t. II. p. 191.

[1] In his *Principes de Morale* (1784), he opposes those who claim that a good policy "would render the unrestrained growth of all the passions useful to society," and seems to refute Fourier in advance. He is not, however, a Stoic: he rejects civic Stoicism, which bases morality on devotion to society, like the *mysticism* which bases it on the love of God. He takes as a basis the love of self, and desires men to rise from the love of self to the love of their fellow-citizens, of humanity, and of God, as being the true road to happiness. His morality, therefore, is *utilitarian*, so far as it is possible for spiritualistic morality to be such. At the bottom, it is that of Franklin.

[2] The head of the sect that attempted to establish communism by force, *Gracchus* Babeuf, deviating from the *Code of Nature* to approach the precepts of Mabli, rejected the arts and social refinements.

Digitized by Google

among children, and the abolition of entails: he wished collateral inheritance to be limited to a certain degree, etc.[1]

"There is an infallible test whereby to judge of the wisdom of a law; namely, to ask whether the law proposed tends to cause greater equality among the citizens."

He desired the transformation of great monarchies into federative republics, the different parts of which should be separately administered, but governed by the same laws, and which should act in concert by means of central assemblies, and make but one body with respect to foreign countries. He took a step beyond Rousseau by acknowledging that great representative democracies can be ruled with more justice and stability than small republics, where the law is voted in the forum. He admitted the penalty of death for great crimes. He desired the arming of the citizens, as in Switzerland; public and general education on the footing of equality; and, like Rousseau, faith in God and a future life as the bases of education and society: but he went farther, and, too often hurried away by a blind imitation of the ancients, desired a veritable religion of State, a political religion beyond Theism, and relapsed into all the abuses infallibly involved by this principle.

In short, Mabli remains one of the most eminent leaders of the political and social school which seeks unity and equality at any price, even at that of individual development. He cannot, however, be unreservedly surrendered to the communists: his imagination was with them, but his reason paused at a mitigated socialism.

We have already pointed out the great geniuses who inclined to the opposite side, Montesquieu and Voltaire, through their natural disposition, nevertheless, and without an exclusive system. We shall presently witness the formation of a systematic school, a real sect, which, if freed from certain inconsistencies pertaining to its origin, appears to tend to absolute individual liberty, even at the expense of national unity and equality, — the sect of the Economists, which closes the vast intellectual circle of the eighteenth century.

We will first, however, cast a glance at the state of manners and the arts, and behold the modifications endured by society since the first half of the century. We saw it formerly brilliant,

[1] He acknowledged that the too great abundance of men is an evil, as well as depopulation. This is remarkable, and marks a new phase in political economy: since the Middle Ages, the complaint had always been respecting the dearth of men.

Digitized by Google

glozed, and careless, like the factitious lights of the Opera ball.[1] We find it again still intoxicated with itself, but with a very different intoxication, full of impetuous flights, bold and contradictory thoughts and unbounded hopes, and advancing with the confidence of youth, by the flashing lightnings of the storm, towards an unknown future.

The old, palled, and refined generation had rapidly given place to a rejuvenated and ardent generation, disputed between all the influences of heaven and hell, and fluctuating between all extremes, — the stoical and civic Deism of Rousseau, the fastidious, humane, and liberal Epicureanism of Voltaire, and the Atheism and unbounded license of the Holbachians. Unheard-of contrasts presented themselves everywhere: a systematic licentiousness succeeded, in the novels of Diderot and his school, the libertine frivolity of their predecessors; an audacious effrontery freed itself from the reticence of good taste, which had preserved decorum while sacrificing morality; the *Maid of Orleans*, which had created a scandal at the time of its appearance in 1755, became a title to honor in the sight of a great part of the public: yet love, the ideal, had returned among us; the eternal divinities of the heart and the imagination were restored to their temples with so much fervor, that selfish and vain levity and hackneyed sensuality dared no longer avow themselves in the fashionable *liaisons*. The reason of this was, that every thing now was done or pretended to be done seriously, even evil. Sentiment, passion, and nature were the gods to which men sacrificed sincerely or through fashion. Duty, even, again found votaries. Lawful love, if it did not reign, was no longer ridiculed. The domestic virtues began to be lauded by most, and practised by many. Rousseau's voice had been heard: mothers nourished their children, natural liberty became again a part of the earliest education, and the old and harsh methods which oppressed and stifled the spontaneity of childhood fell into discredit, and were abandoned. This transitional generation was paving the way for a generation more virile in body and heart, in which every thing would be strong and energetic both for good and for evil. The ideas of social renovation were in every one's mind, superficial in the frivolous, and profound in the rest, whom they inflamed to fanaticism. Men had now an aim: this alone changed every thing. The words liberty, citizen, the country, and equality, were in vogue among all that thought, read, and spoke: the fash-

[1] See vol. I. p. 298 *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

ionable man was called Richelieu the day before; he was speedily to be called La Fayette.

No age had been less dependent on traditions: the universal watchword seemed to be, War on all authority, war on all *prejudice*. Nevertheless, humanity cannot live in the domain of the absolute, or free itself from the necessity of connecting the future with the past, which is the very law of progress. To know one's precedents while judging them is a great part of the science of life. The eighteenth century did not escape this law. It willingly accepted the hypothetical ancient France of Mabli; it studied contemporaneous England with Montesquieu: but it clung, above all, with Rousseau as well as with Montesquieu and Mabli themselves, to a tradition more authentic than the first, and more direct, although more remote, than the second. The admiration of the ancients revived on all sides, no longer literary as in the seventeenth century, but political as in the sixteenth, and with much more force and effectiveness. The excellent Rollin had paved the way, without suspecting it, for the work of the political philosophers. It was no longer of the Latin men of letters, the courtiers of the Cæsars, but of the Roman citizens of the republican era and their predecessors of the Hellenic cities, that lessons and examples were to be sought, — a new phase of the Renaissance, in which immortal antiquity, after aiding us in reconstructing our ideas and arts, was about to aid us in reconstructing our laws and societies, and in delivering the modern era from the yoke of the intermediate age! The movement was legitimate, despite the errors, excesses, and unskilfulness of an imitation which too often attached itself to the form, where the spirit, the moral inspiration, should alone have been sought. However profitable to us may have been the excellent examples of English liberty, our national tradition proceeds from elsewhere. Many superior minds, a whole great party, were to exhaust themselves in following Delolme, the popularizer of the English Constitution, while believing themselves to be following Montesquieu, and in attempting to transplant upon our soil the mixed forms of hereditary inheritance and election, of aristocracy and democracy, peculiar to Great Britain, which the English race itself rejected as soon as it settled outside of England in new conditions.[1] The monarchy, which created our national unity, was the offspring of the Roman empire.[2] The

[1] The Anglo-Americans have indeed preserved the two houses, but have rendered them both elective.

[2] Not alone, however, of the Roman empire: two other traditions were combined

Digitized by Google

democracy, whose mission it was to create our moral unity, would find in itself primitive Gaul modified by Greece, the two Romes, and Christianity.[1]

The great movement of public opinion was manifested everywhere in manners and customs. By the side of the indications that we have pointed out, other symptoms appeared, of less gravity, but which should not be neglected by history. The costume, for instance, began to be less gorgeous and artificial, at once by a spontaneous modification and in imitation of the English. Plain stuffs of grave colors reappeared among men; and that elegant simplicity, so much celebrated by Rousseau in his heroines, among women. The hoops and the enormous coiffures would have disappeared before, had not court etiquette maintained them in opposition to the spirit of innovation. Women were not long in

with this, the feudal and Germanic tradition; and the Hebrew tradition of the *Anointed of the Lord*, introduced in the train of Christianity.

[1] That of the ancient republic and that of the jurisconsults, those admirable men, who saved the honor of the human race amidst the ignominy of the era of the Cæsars; apostles of equity, who founded civil law, to console the world for political law, momentarily lost. In the course of the history of the seventeenth century, we have called to mind the claims to honor of the most illustrious successor of these great men, our Domat. The Cartesian and Jansenist jurisconsult had, in his turn, a successor in the eighteenth century, the indefatigable Pothier. A stranger to his time by his morals, beliefs, and even prejudices, Pothier was allied to it by the services which he rendered to the cause of progress. While theory demanded judicial reforms by the voice of the philosophers, practice, with Pothier, paved the way for their realization. Calm, simple, and pious, like Domat, whose opinions and sentiments he possessed, without his metaphysical profundity, Pothier passed his whole life at Orleans (1699–1772), at first in the modest functions of the presidial court; then in the chair of French law, to which he was appointed by D'Aguesseau, whom he had greatly aided in the preparation of his numerous ordinances on the unity of jurisprudence. Pothier published, from 1748 to 1752, his *Pandectes justiniennes, rédigées dans un nouvel ordre*, under the auspices and with the assistance of D'Aguesseau. Domat had begun his career with the idea of reëstablishing order in the chaotic compilation of Tribonian, and rose from this point to the theory itself of civil law: Pothier realized Domat's first idea, less lofty, but eminently useful. For the first time, we had the true body of the Roman law, restored and properly arranged according to the rational and geometrical method. Next to the works of genius, the most admirable are the labors of learning and patience, employed by an upright mind and a just heart. In 1760, Pothier published the *Coutume d'Orléans, avec Commentaires*. These commentaries, which embrace all the diversities of our local law, form, perhaps, the most complete and methodical treatise on this subject extant. The *Traité des Obligations* appeared in 1761; then other treatises on contracts. The careless simplicity and easy good nature of Pothier leave a little more dignity and elegance to be desired: yet his logic and lucidity are not the only things which secure for this jurisconsult the respect of posterity; but also, and above all, the essentially moral character of his method. Faithful to the tradition of Domat, he always reasons from the internal tribunal, the tribunal of the conscience, — from what is *just in itself* to positive law. He was the principal source of the CIVIL CODE with respect to contracts, the best part of this code, and will always remain the best commentator thereon.

Digitized by Google

restoring to their hair its liberty and its natural colors. The return to Nature was invoked in trifles as in great things.

The most marked signs of a moral revolution were manifested in the arts. Sentiments of patriotism and of French nationality appeared in tragedy, applauded by Rousseau, despite the monarchical form in which they were still invested, and although there was little except intention to praise in the poet De Belloi. The new tendencies were more happily expressed on another stage. From 1760 to 1780, the essentially French school of the comic opera blossomed forth in all its glory, — that familiar drama in prose mixed with verse, which realized in part the wishes of Diderot, and contradicted the system of Rousseau concerning the musical incapacity of France, while prodigally drawing inspiration from Rousseau himself, but from Rousseau tempered and softened. Sedaine and other writers lent a successful coöperation to the musicians, — the graceful Dalairac, and Monsigni, an artist full of feeling, who *sang by instinct*, as was said of him by his illustrous rival, Grétri,[1] whose simple and rapid melodies, sparkling with eternal youth, still enchant us by their very contrast to the colossal works of that modern music which succumbs beneath the complications of its science and the weight of its enormous machinery. The essential characteristics of Grétri and his rivals are naturalness, lively and charming art, without subtlety, vehemence or overpowering fire, and thrilling, naïve, and tender passion. There is nothing therein that savors of a corrupt society. We seem to feel in this rejuvenated art the coolness of a vernal breeze: it is like those songs of birds, which, in one of the creations of the great German symphonist, so closely precede the bursting of the storm.

A foreigner, a German, came to complete the young French school by striking deeper chords, and possessing himself of the grand opera. Gluck had struggled long against the insignificance of the Italian canvases. His altogether dramatic genius revealed itself only when he at length found subjects worthy of his thoughts, and a libretto-writer capable of comprehending him. "I have sought," he writes, "to reduce music to its true function, — that of seconding poetry in order to strengthen the expression of the sentiments and the interest of the situations; without interrupting the action, and damping it by superfluous ornament. I think that it ought to add to the action what is added to a correct and well-composed drawing by the vividness of the coloring and the har-

[1] Born at Liége in 1741.

Digitized by Google

mony of the light and shade, which animate the figures without weakening their contour." He had imposed his power on Italy, greatly opposed to his principles, but astonished at his genius. He felt his affinity with the French spirit, came to Paris to settle, espoused our language, and consummated its rehabilitation from the anathemas of Rousseau (1774). France enthusiastically welcomed this glorious adopted son, this Poussin of music; but Italy, resuming the offensive, disputed France with Gluck, or rather with herself, on the great stage of Paris (1778); and the war of the *Gluckists* and the *Piccinists* — of the French system and the Italian system — was prolonged among us till the eve of the Revolution.

The genius of Grétri and Gluck were very different; but their views were the same. "My music," wrote Grétri, "is not so energetic as that of Gluck; but I believe it to be the truest of all kinds of dramatic composition: it utters the words precisely according to their local declamation. I have not turned the brain by high tragedy; but I have revealed the accent of truth, and have caused it to sink deeper into the hearts of men." To him, also, expression was every thing. He could not conceive the idea of separating the music for an instant from the words. In the very overtures and ritornellos, he wished it to continue to bear a direct relation to what had preceded or was about to follow it; and even his dance-music participated in the action.[1]

The pure French system doubtless imposed too narrow limits on musical inspiration. The opposite excess has been seen in that Italian school, which has triumphed through a brilliant genius in our days, and which the French spirit has speedily modified anew, by approaching nearer to the medium found by the great Mozart.

In the philosophic point of view, if it is necessary to choose between the two exclusive ideas, there is no room for doubt. The question of technical system pertains too closely to the question of moral character. Gluck understood music like the ancient Greeks. His austere genius presaged that which was to be reëchoed by the accents of new Tyrtæuses, no longer in the opera, but on the battle-field.

The same spirit appeared in the plastic arts. If the Pigalles and the Falconets, while maintaining for French sculpture a relative superiority in Europe,[2] did not give it a strongly determined

[1] He said already of Mozart, what was to be said later of Beethoven and other Germans of the nineteenth century, "He puts the statue in the orchestra, and the pedestal on the stage." — See the *Biographie universelle* concerning Gluck and Grétri.

[2] The principal works of Falconet were ordered by foreign governments. The most

Digitized by Google

impulse, the progress was very decided in architecture after 1760. The severity and simplicity of antique lines were aimed at; and the contorted and fantastic forms and capricious and overwrought ornaments were abolished. To cite examples, the Mint, the beautiful edifices of the Place Louis XV. (the Garde-Meuble and the Hôtel de la Marine), and, in grander if not irreproachable proportions, the St. Geneviève or Pantheon of Soufflot, attested the profound modification of taste, but did not yet announce the caprice into which the classical school would afterwards fall when it set about purely and simply copying the Greek temples, as if there were an absolute type in architecture which should not be transformed according to climates and customs.

There was the same revolution in painting. The vulgar license of Boucher was succeeded by the spiritual and voluptuous grace of Fragonard, and the plebeian sentimentality of Greuse, who represented upon his canvas the drama invoked by Diderot. The landscape-painters of the opera, who had preserved the conventionality of Watteau without his poetry, disappeared before Joseph Vernet, the painter of the sea, or at least of the sea-ports, — a model of earnest, conscientious, and finished talent, if not of naïve and inspired genius.[1]

These were only preludes. Grand historical painting, which had expired more than half a century before, was about to be resuscitated with extraordinary lustre. By a strange freak of Providence, it was the grand-nephew of the painter of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs* that was to paint the thunder-cloud bursting over the turrets of Versailles! A young man, of a strong and rugged nature, the relative and pupil of Boucher, but already seeking an ill-defined end by other ways, was sent to Rome as laureate in 1775, where he found study elevated under the influence of Winckelmann and his *History of Art among the Ancients* (published in 1764). It was there, under the twofold current of the æsthetic enthusiasm of Winckelmann and the republican enthu-

celebrated is the equestrian colossus of Peter the Great at St. Petersburg. Meanwhile, *genre* sculpture and the sculpture of busts preserved all its refinement and truth. Houdon is the Delatour of statuary.

[1] Many distinguished names may be cited in *genre* painting, — the elegant Lancret; Desportes, the skilful animal-painter; Chardin, excellent in familiar scenes; Lépicié, the portrait-painter; Oudri, the painter of hunting-pieces; Bachelier, the flower-painter; Hubert Robert, the painter of Roman ruins; Lantara; and Loutherbourg, so much extolled by Diderot. The invention of the art of putting old pictures on new canvas by Picaut had just furnished great assistance in preserving the old masterpieces threatened and injured by time.

Digitized by Google

siasm of Rousseau and Mabli, that Louis David was formed. The one gave him his subjects and inspiration; the others his form, and that tendency to make statuary in painting, as the sculptors of the beginning of the eighteenth century had made painting in statuary.

It is not our province to dwell in detail here on the merits or the defects of this great artist. The author of the *Horaces*, the *Death of Socrates*, the *Brutus*, the *Oath of the Tennis-Court*, and *Leonidas;* the composer of those festivals copied from the antique, which the memory cannot succeed in disconnecting sufficiently from the terrible scenes amidst which they were celebrated, — belongs to the history of modern France. We have only to chronicle his origin.

We must return from the fine arts to the philosophic region most remote from the sphere of the beautiful, — POLITICAL ECONOMY. The philosophers whose doctrines we have hitherto set forth had made social economy, like the ancients, only an adjunct of politics. The school of which it remains for us to speak, on the contrary, subordinated politics with every thing else to economy, but to a transcendent economy which strove to identify justice and utility, the moral laws and the physical laws. The physiocrats are the last phalanx to be reviewed in the great army of the French mind of the eighteenth century. The last-comers, they were the first called upon to put their doctrines to the test, because they appeared the least opposed, if not to the reality of existing facts, at least to the form of the established power.

During long ages, every thing concerning the formation and distribution of wealth had been abandoned to empiricism, routine, popular prejudices, the interests, more or less well understood and more or less changeable, of governments and industrial corporations, and the more or less arbitrary interpretations of religious precepts. The science of wealth had not even a name among the human sciences, and it did not seem to be suspected that this kind of phenomena might have laws peculiar to itself. The commercial republics of the Middle Ages were the first to show a certain consistency in regulations which bore the imprint of their bitter rivalries: they gave the outline of the protective, or rather prohibitory system, which was borrowed from them by the Spanish monarchy, and which an Italian minister, Chancellor Birague, introduced complete in all its parts into France under Catherine de Medici. Sulli reacted forcibly, in behalf of the agricultural interests, against a commercial legislation which prohibited the

Digitized by Google

exportation of raw materials. The *mercantile* movement, however, had the ascendency. Public opinion was in its favor, as is attested by the *cahiers* (official instructions) of the States-General of 1614. The system no longer of absolute prohibition, but of differential duties, which developed manufactures and maritime commerce by the protection of the State, was in full vigor in the seventeenth century with Cromwell in England, and Colbert in France. The rivalries of commerce envenomed the old political rivalries: antagonism existed everywhere. The fortunes of the mercantile system were various: of three great States that applied it, Spain was ruined, France and England prospered. Holland, it is true, succeeded on her side by the system of liberty rendered necessary by her character as the factor of nations.

Foreign commerce is only one term of the problem of wealth: if France and England followed the same course in this respect, they gave very different solutions on two other questions of prime importance, — the internal organization of the arts and manufactures, and the assessment of the taxes. The arts and manufactures, well-nigh free in the primitive constitution of the corporations of the Middle Ages, had been continually more and more restricted, hemmed in, and shackled among us, from age to age. Colbert alone had sought to turn to the advantage of the national interests, and of a typical perfection of manufacture, the restrictive regulations invented by the selfish interests of privileged artisans and of the royal treasury. He succeeded at first; but, after him, his regulations remaining stationary while wants and tastes multiplied, the instrument of progress speedily became an obstacle to it. As to the taxes, we have had occasion to dwell but too often on their bad assessment, the still worse mode of their collection, and the iniquitous privileges which concentrated almost the entire burden upon the lower classes. Colbert had not been at liberty to change the system, and all the practical improvements which he had introduced therein disappeared with him. England, on the contrary, after the example of Holland, relaxed, then broke almost everywhere the industrial fetters of the Middle Ages: taxation with her, better assessed and better collected, did not go so far as to dry up the source of the public wealth by crushing the laborer at his plough. The taxes on consumption were less onerous than in France, and the land-tax was laid on the estate, and not on the labor. The rich did not claim the shameful privilege of throwing their share of the public burdens on the poor.

Digitized by Google

England, therefore, continued to grow rich; while France, the brilliant epoch of Colbert once eclipsed, languished, advanced but slowly and with unequal tread, and suffered herself to be outstripped by her rival.

Public opinion, meanwhile, had long separated external protection from internal regulation. The States-General of 1614 had claimed the freedom of the arts and manufactures; and doubts had been more than once uttered, even in Colbert's presence, concerning the value of the regulating and restrictive system. Tradition has preserved the merchant Legendre's reply to the great minister. "What must be done to aid you?" "*Let us alone.*" A few years after, Bois-Guillebert protested at once against internal regulations and external protection, and showed that the mercantile system reposed on a false basis with respect to the part assigned to the precious metals; that great illusions existed concerning what is called the *balance of trade;* that a State enriches itself, not by attracting and retaining within its limits the greatest possible quantity of gold and silver, but by increasing the fruits of the earth and the *products of manufactures*, and facilitating their consumption. He maintained that the regulation of industrial and commercial intercourse belongs to Nature, and not to men; in other terms, that economic phenomena should be absolutely abandoned to the free competition of individuals. At the same time, he affirmed that not only all the citizens of the same nation, but all the nations of the earth, are connected together by solidarity of interests; that all exchange must be alike profitable to both parties; that it is impossible to sell without buying, and that it is impossible to injure others without being injured one's self. Far from seeing universal warfare in competition, he thus proclaimed in the economic domain, in the name of interest, the same law of human solidarity that Christianity and philosophy proclaimed in the moral domain in the name of duty.

This singular and bold genius was the true father of the economists. The two essential principles adhered to by every economic school, without distinction of shades, — the substitution of liberty for authority in individual intercourse, and of solidarity for antagonism in international intercourse, — were revealed in him in all their greatness, all their abstract truth, and all their peril; peril, if this truth is made to exclude all other truths; peril, if liberty implies the denial of collective rights and duties; peril,

Digitized by Google

if international solidarity prematurely disarms nationality in favor of cosmopolitanism.

The general theories of Bois-Guillebert, mixed with many eccentricities and historical errors, did not at first extend beyond a small circle of meditative minds. The special theory of Vauban on taxation (the abolition of privileges, the abolition of the greater part of the taxes on consumption, and the proportional assessment of a direct tax on incomes from real estate and others) was more widely diffused. The special theory of Law on credit, which carried with it an entire reorganization of social economy, was tested, excited, then overturned France; and ideas of credit were long swept away from among us by the reaction that followed the failure of this colossal attempt; while credit worked successfully in England, where it was introduced with less noise and rashness. The idea of industrial liberty was not involved in this defeat, but unceasingly gained ground among us, at the same time that the violent convulsions which occurred in the domain of conventional values turned the public mind towards the inexhaustible source of real wealth, — the land, the cultivation of the soil. Meanwhile the doctrines of Bois-Guillebert on free international exchange, and the vanity of the balance of trade and the monopolization of the metallic currency, were adopted by a few English writers, then returned to us from the other side of the Channel with the works of David Hume and Josiah Tucker. David Hume, a metaphysician, economist, and historian, combined the appeal to liberty with the defence of luxury, which he sustained by a new and specious argument. "It has been the arts of luxury," he says, "that have produced the industrial and commercial classes, the middle classes; and it has been the middle classes that have taken the initiative in reforms, and secured their triumph in spite of the aristocracy." He well refutes the old maxim, "The profit of one is the injury of another," and demonstrates that it is more to the interest of a commercial nation to be surrounded with rich nations than poor ones, "for the same reason that one does a better business with an opulent man than with a man destitute of means." [1]

The number of thinkers that turned their attention to these problems continued to increase among us. The moment had come for the systematizing spirit of the eighteenth century and of France inevitably to take possession of them, and to strive to convert them into a methodical and positive science. Two men,

[1] D. Hume, *Essay on Commerce*, etc.

Digitized by Google

powerful through their character and the energy of their convictions, and favored by their position in society, took the leadership of the movement. One was the intendant of commerce, Vincent de Gournai: the other was Dr. Quesnai, the physician to the King. Gournai, an able and upright merchant before becoming a member of the bureau of commerce, had arrived at theory only by a long practice of facts. It was while living, as a witness and an actor, amidst the innumerable accidents and incessant variations of external and internal commerce, that he believed that he discerned "the sole and primitive laws, founded on Nature herself, by which all the values existing in commerce vibrate, then settle at a determined value, as bodies abandoned to their own weight arrange themselves spontaneously according to the order of their specific gravity."[1] If Nature regulates economic relations by necessary laws, men should not interfere by arbitrary laws: LET THEM ALONE.

Let them alone! that is, let there be no more regulations to shackle manufacture, and make the right to labor a privilege; no more prohibitions to prevent exchanges; no more excessive and multiplied duties to fetter circulation and restrict consumption; no more tariffs to fix the value of commodities and merchandise. Wheat is merchandise as well as any thing else: it should be transported and exported freely. Money is merchandise as well as any thing else: the conditions of loaning money, and the agreements that regulate its interest, should be free. The State should not lay a tariff on money any more than on any other negotiable article: it should only labor indirectly to reduce the rate of interest, by refraining from increasing, by its own loans, the number of those in quest of capital.

Is liberty, the *let-alone policy*, the absolute denial of public action, of the interference of the State with respect to manufactures and commerce? This was not the idea of Gournai, who strongly approved of encouragements, rewards, and premiums. The State should not fetter the voluntary activity of the citizens, but is in no wise forbidden to stimulate and aid, to enlighten and sustain it. Let statesmen give enlightenment and support to laboring men, but leave each one to use this enlightenment and support as he chooses. The interests of private individuals being the same as the general interests, and each man understanding his own interests better than any other man to whom these interests are indifferent, the general interests will be better served by the free

[1] Turgot, *Éloge de Gournai.*

Digitized by Google

individual activity of interested persons than by the careless or arbitrary direction of agents of the State. The system of liberty will succeed much better than the restrictive system in increasing the public wealth, and will prevent the abrupt and violent variations of the price of necessary commodities, — variations which are so onerous to the people, and so dangerous to the government. The restrictive and regulating system is equally prejudicial to the State and to the majority of the citizens; for it places the poor at the mercy of the rich. The general liberty to manufacture, to buy and to sell, is the only means of insuring to the vender, on the one hand, a price capable of encouraging production, and to the consumer, on the other, the best merchandise at the lowest price compatible with the just remuneration of the producer.

Such were the principles earnestly propagated by M. de Gournai, not by his writings, for he published no original work,[1] but by his speech and personal action. The chief of the bureau of commerce, his hierarchic superior, M. Trudaine,[2] became a convert to his doctrines, aided him in attempting some partial and prudent applications of them, and authorized him to spread them among the provincial administrations, and the commercial and manufacturing classes, in the fruitful rounds which he made from province to province during several years. It was in one of these journeys that he instigated the establishment of the Breton Society for the Improvement of Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce (1756); a society the example of which gave rise to many analogous associations throughout the rest of France.[3] Gournai died prematurely, at forty-seven, in 1759; and posterity might have failed to recognize the importance of the part played by him, had not his merits been brought to light and his views excellently summed up by the illustrious man who was destined to attempt to realize them on a large scale, and who had been, while still young, the companion of his journeys and his economic apostleship, — Turgot.

M. de Gournai, although he possessed the generalizing spirit in a very high degree, had been especially a practical man. The theorist, the systematic organizer of the new science, was the phy-

[1] But two translations of English works are possessed from his pen; but he inspired numerous writers against the shackles on manufactures. Among the publicists in his train is observed the name of *Roland de la Platière*, the inspector of manufactures, and the author of the article *Métirises*, in the *Encyclopédie:* he was the future minister and martyr of the Revolution.

[2] It was under Trudaine, the director of bridges and highways, that the bridges of Orleans, Tours, Saumur, and Moulins, were built.

[3] Societies of Tours, Paris, Lyons, Montauban, etc., 1761.

Digitized by Google

sician, François Quesnai. Gournai and he had pursued, at first separately, then in concert, parallel but not identical paths. The origin of Gournai was commercial; that of Quesnai,[1] agricultural. Although the son of a jurisconsult, Quesnai had been brought up as a countryman; and the taste for the country, the anxiety for rural interests, had constantly followed him in the career into which he had been drawn by other inclinations and aptitudes. Surgery made his fortune: he aided his celebrated fellow-surgeon, La Peironnie, in elevating their art from the inferior position in which it was kept by the physicians. The perpetual secretary of the Academy of Surgery founded in 1731 at the instigation of La Peironnie, the author of excellent works on pathology, he practised surgery and medicine with equal success; and, become the physician-in-chief to the King and the physician of Madame de Pompadour, he took advantage of the functions which gave him intimate access to the King and the favorite to open the ear of the masters of France to his economic doctrines. A strange existence was that of this simple, upright, open, and positive man among all the types of corruption and falsehood that peopled Versailles. Louis and his mistress loved him as well as they could love any thing: he pleased them by his contrast to others and to themselves. Louis, so ill disposed towards all the rest of the philosophers, called Quesnai his *thinker*,[2] listened to him willingly, and, a thing rare with him, did not listen fruitlessly, as was attested by royal edicts of which we shall speak hereafter, and which were due to the personal influence of Quesnai as much as to the counsel of that bureau of commerce of which Gournai was the soul. These fruits, it must be said, were speedily poisoned by the depravity of Louis and his surroundings. The political side of the system of Quesnai explains the difference made by Louis between the economists and the rest of the innovators. Quesnai undertook to consolidate the *throne*, and did not touch the *altar*.

This was not, indeed, because he was a timid innovator. None manifested a like intrepidity of certainty in the conceptions of his brain; none had an ambition so colossal. This apostle of *physical government* was the most abstract, as the most trenchant, dogmatist of his age. This theorist of material wealth formed his mind by studying the transcendent spiritualism of Malebranche.

[1] Born at Merey, near Montfort-l'Amaury, June 4, 1694.

[2] He gave him letters of nobility, with three pansies (*pensées*) for arms, and the device, *Propter cogitationem mentis*. This was, moreover, an anachronism as to substance, and a bad pun as to form. — See curious details concerning Quesnai in Madame du Hausset.

Digitized by Google

The reason of this was, that he did not aspire to found the special science of wealth, but the general science upon which all others depend, — the science of social life and human relations. The science of wealth was to him only a derivative of the knowledge of natural right. He desired to base a whole system of social philosophy upon the knowledge of the natural laws which regulate the relations of man with matter, and of man with man relative to matter.

Human society is a necessary fact. Providence has assigned to it necessary laws, — laws, at least, which it cannot transgress without injury to itself. Utility and justice are identical for all society: morality and interest, right and duty, are essentially united.[1] The mission of the government, the authority, is not to *make* laws, but to *declare*, to proclaim, the necessary and natural laws, and to insure their observance. *Evidence* is the principle which should guide both the governing and the governed; that is, the natural laws should be rendered so evident, that it would be impossible for society longer to endure arbitrary laws.[2] Public instruction is the great means of initiating men into *evidence*. Instruction is the first, the fundamental duty of the State.

But what are these natural and necessary laws?

Natural right is the right which man has to the things adapted to his enjoyment. The natural order is the physical constitution which God himself has given to the universe, and through which every thing is effected in Nature. The natural laws are the essential conditions to which men are subjected in order to secure all the advantages which the natural order can procure for them.[3] From these laws are derived society and the rules of society. Man's natural right is, in point of fact, increased, and not diminished, by society. The natural social order founds on the incontestable experience of physical good and evil the *evident* knowl-

[1] "No rights without duties, no duties without rights," was well said by Lemercier de La Rivière, one of the principal disciples of Quesnai.

[2] "We can reduce to a *physical*, exact, *evident*, and complete science, that of right, order, laws, and natural government." — *Physiocratie*, t. I., 1767; *Discours* of the editor (Dupont de Nemours), who has collected, under the title *Physiocratie*, or the Government of Nature, all the principal writings of Quesnai. The *Physiocratie* has been republished in the collection of the economists, Guillaumin, 1846.

[3] The natural laws are either physical or moral. "By physical law is meant the regulated course of every physical event of the natural order, which is *evidently* the most advantageous to the human race. By moral law is meant the rule of every human action of the moral order in conformity with the physical order, which is *evidently* the most advantageous to the human race." — Quesnai, *Droit naturel*; ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 52, Guillaumin, 1846.

Digitized by Google

edge of moral good and evil, of essential justice and injustice. The legitimate order consists in the right of possession secured and guaranteed by force of a tutelary and sovereign authority to men united in society.

Natural right ends directly, therefore, in the principle of property, and is summed up therein entire.

Property has three phases legitimately begotten of each other: 1st, *Personal* property, identical with liberty, or the ownership of the faculties which have been given us by Nature, and which are the instruments of labor necessary for our preservation; 2d, Movable property, or the ownership of articles of consumption acquired by our labor; 3d, Landed property, the appropriation of the soil which produces the articles of consumption, acquired by its first clearing and its continued cultivation. The appropriation of the soil, like the other two kinds of property, falls within the domain of the natural laws, in the sense, that, being more productive than collective property, it was necessary in order to secure to communities the greatest development of which they were susceptible.[1]

Individual appropriation, doubtless, greatly increases the inequality made by Nature among men; but the inequality of conditions does not offend the *essential order of justice*. "The law of property is indeed the same for all men. Rights are all of equal *justice;* but they are not all of equal *value*, because their value is wholly independent of the law. Each one acquires in proportion to the faculties which give him the means of acquiring: now the measure of these faculties is not the same among all men."[2] In other terms, the equality demanded by the natural laws is the equality of rights, and not the equality of possessions.

Society once founded upon property, how is it organized, how governed?

The earth producing more than is necessary for the subsistence of him who cultivates it, and certain of the land-owners having increased their portion of the soil by inheritance, purchase, etc., they have become able to cease cultivating it themselves, and to intrust the cultivation of their lands to other citizens, in consideration of sharing in its fruits. Still others, being neither land-

[1] "The happiness of the human species consists in the multiplicity of its enjoyments. To render the enjoyments common, it is necessary that the property should be exclusive."—*Abrégé des principes de l'Économie politique*, 1772 (attributed to the Margrave Ch. Fr. de Bade); ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 368.

[2] Lemercier de La Rivière, *Ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques*, ch. ii.

Digitized by Google

owners nor husbandmen, set to work to manipulate, transform, and circulate the products of the soil in behalf of the owners and the husbandmen, and give their labor in exchange for their subsistence. Three classes are therefore formed: 1st, The productive class, or the husbandmen; 2d, The land-owning, or *disposable* class, — disposable for liberal studies, public functions, etc.; 3d, The *sterile* class, or the artisans and traffickers, — sterile, not because it is useless, but because, the earth alone being productive of wealth, the labor of the artisans and traders serves only to preserve the wealth produced, and does not add new wealth thereto.

The earth alone being productive of wealth, the public burdens should be assessed only on the product of the earth. But it is necessary to make a distinction in this product between the gross revenue and the net revenue, which Vauban has not done in his royal income-tax. From the gross revenues must be deducted the expenses of the cultivation and improvement of the soil, the subsistence of the laborer and his assistants, and his just remuneration. There remains the net revenue of the land-owner, the only disposable revenue which exists in society. It is upon this net revenue, or landed income, that taxation should be laid exclusively. The taxation levied on the other classes always falls in the end upon the land-owner, who receives a smaller revenue if the farmer is impoverished; and the bad system of collection creates, in this case, a new class, no longer merely sterile, but injurious and parasitical, — the class of financiers and fiscal agents. No financial fortunes should be made in the administration of the taxes. The credit of financiers is a bad resource for the State, which should be supported by taxation, and not by loans. Pecuniary fortunes are clandestine wealth that knows no country.

The State, the sovereign, is the co-proprieter of the net revenue with the individual land-owners. It is for reason, for *evidence*, to fix the share which lawfully reverts to it, without injury to private citizens. The husbandmen should dispose of nearly three-fifths of the gross revenue, — two-fifths for their expenses, compensation, and agricultural agents, and one-fifth to pay for the labors of the sterile class which are necessary to them. The remaining two-fifths form the net revenue to be divided between the land-owners and the State.

The share of the State paid, the rights of the land-owner are unlimited with respect to the use of the remainder of his revenue,[1]

[1] Nevertheless, he fails in an essential duty if he hoards his money, and suffers it to lie

Digitized by Google

and the disposition of his land; as the rights of the husbandman, the artisan, and all men in general, are unlimited with respect to the fruits of their labor, which are their *movable* property, and the employment of their faculties, which are their *personal* property. Every shackle on labor, manufactures, or commerce, is a violation of the natural laws, of the laws of God.

The reëstablishment of the natural laws would result in increasing the net revenue of the land-owner and the compensation of the husbandman, diminishing the profits of the master manufacturers and merchants artificially raised by the protective system, and overthrowing artificial manufactures in behalf of natural manufactures, or those for which Nature has endowed each country with a special aptitude.

The government should encourage only the *productive* expenditures and the commerce of raw materials. The products of handicraft and manufactures for the use of the nation are only a source of expense, and not of revenue. Their sale abroad can be profitable only to those countries where manual labor is cheap on account of the low price of provisions; a condition very disadvantageous to the revenue from landed property, and consequently to the net revenue and the State.

The increase of revenues should be thought of more than the increase of population. There is less need of attracting men than wealth to the rural districts; for the more wealth is employed in agriculture, the fewer men are occupied therein, the more it prospers, and the larger is its revenue. Agriculture prospers only when carried on upon a large scale by rich farmers.

The natural and necessary laws determine not only the foundation of the social organization, but the form of the best government, the government made for man, and adapted to all climates and all nations. The necessity of protecting personal and movable property rendered necessary the establishment of leaders or magistrates from the origin of society; but the *economic* government, the normal government, was not established

idle instead of putting it again into circulation; or if he employs it in fanciful purchases, in ornamental superfluities, while expenditures useful to the increase of the social capital remain to be made: for "the augmentation of capital is the chief means of increasing labor, and the greatest interest of society. Money, in reality, belongs, not to private individuals, but to the necessities of the State, to the nation; and no one should hold it back." This was the language of Law; but the idea differed, inasmuch as, where Law saw a right of constraint in the hands of the State, Quesnai sees only a moral duty of the private citizen. — *Maximes générales du gouvernement économique d'un royaume agricole;* ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 94.

Digitized by Google

until the institution of landed property, which gave society much greater interests to defend, and made it feel the need of a more concentrated and stronger authority. The tutelary and sovereign authority (Quesnai and his disciples use the term *sovereign* in the old acceptation, and confound the sovereign with the government, like the publicists prior to Rousseau) — the sovereign authority should be alone; that is, it should unite the legislative and the executive. There should be no *counter forces* (distinction or balance of powers). There should be no aristocracy. The division of society into different orders of citizens, some of which exercise sovereign authority over others, destroys the unity of the nation, and substitutes class interests for the general interest, which is the prosperity of agriculture. The sovereign should be invested with *despotic* authority to transform the laws of *evidence* into positive laws, and to secure their execution. Only it is the duty of the magistrates to examine whether the ordinances of the sovereign are in conformity with *evidence;* and the magistrates themselves should be watched over by *public evidence*. In a nation enlightened by a good system of public instruction concerning the natural laws of order, the government neither would nor could desire to establish positive laws injurious to society, and even to the sovereign. Should it do so, it would be through aberration of mind, and neither the magistrates nor the people should obey.

Quesnai and his disciples do not say, but it tacitly follows from their principles, that in this case, should the sovereign persist, he would be suspended in fact, and the power would be transferred to his heir, — the sovereign power, according to the physiocrats, being hereditary, in order that all the present and future interests of its depositary may be intimately allied with those of society by the proportional division of the net product. Wherever *evidence* reigns, all political guarantees, beginning with election, would be indeed superfluous.

We have endeavored to point out in a few pages, according to the head of the school and his commentaries, the principal outlines of the new science to which Quesnai applied the hitherto vague and floating title of *political economy*,[1] and which, absorbing politics and ethics, was to him the science *par excellence*.

We cannot forbear a profound impression, in which very different feelings are blended, before the vast and bold structure built by this powerful mind. We are bewildered and troubled by this

[1] Literally, *law of the political household*, social law.

Digitized by Google

amalgamation of new and sublime views, lofty truths, hazardous conjectures, and arbitrary or even chimerical notions, transformed into so-called *evident* dogmas. We feel that all the economic battles of the future would take place in the lists opened by Quesnai, as all the battles of metaphysics had been, and would be, fought on the ground of Descartes. When we endeavor to unravel this first impression, and to judge after having felt, we perceive, on the one hand, that the new theory is nothing else than the fundamental principle of Montesquieu, "Laws are the necessary relations which are derived from the nature of things," developed in the special point of view of the application of human liberty to the appropriation of matter and to economic organization: on the other hand, we see, face to face with the *social contract* of Rousseau, a different conception set forth of the primitive compact;[1] namely, the direct foundation of society upon individual right, and not upon that alienation of each to all, laid down as the basis by Rousseau. The Christian law has been styled the *law of grace:* the law of the economists is the law of justice. To each one his right. The economists reject the antagonism affirmed by Rousseau between the state of nature and the social state: the one is to them the natural and necessary sequence of the other.

This difference at the starting-point was to be found again in the definition of the principle of property. Rousseau, while recognizing it as the foundation of society, made it proceed from positive laws, without denying that it had its indirect origin in the sociability of man: the economists connected it directly with natural laws. It was at the very beginning of a war against the principle of property, destined to be renewed more skilfully and more obstinately, more passionately and more subtly, by turns, during several generations, that this principle was affirmed with an unexampled dogmatic energy and mathematical precision; so that the defence was proportioned in advance to the attack. The economists gave the theory of what Protestantism had forcibly put into practice. The Protestant nations had simultaneously developed human individuality and property, and thus showed in fact that the

[1] The term *natural and necessary laws*, employed by the economists, seems to imply the negation of the social contract; but this term exceeds their true idea. Moral *necessity* was in question with them, and not fatality; since they admit that primitive society, before the establishment of landed property, was good, but simply less good than the system of society where appropriation is established. It was therefore in voluntary obedience to the providential law of progress that man passed from one form of society to another. — See Dupont de Nemours, *Physiocratie, Discours de l'éditeur.*

Digitized by Google

one is the sequence of the other, as was to be taught by the economists. The antique agricultural development had coincided with the establishment of landed property: the modern industrial development coincided with the new progress of the principle of property, due to individualism, or rather to Protestant liberty, — a principle for a moment so far exaggerated as to deny the right of expropriation for the public use. The Protestant nations are certainly those in which property is most firmly established, and with it the family. Property had been, in general, imperfectly recognized and feebly respected both by the secular and the ecclesiastical powers in the Catholic States: we have quoted the maxims of Louis XIV. on this subject, which need no comment.

The economists were likewise allied, as to the principle of property, to a more ancient tradition, — the tradition of the people essentially *judicial* and *land-owning*, above all others; the Roman people. Like Montesquieu, like Rousseau, like Mabli, they also trod the paths of republican antiquity; but they had entered it by another door. It was precisely the part of their doctrines, that which was allied to the spirit of Roman property, which was to be the first to triumph in the movement of 1789; and in the CIVIL CODE, the offspring of this movement.

It is not difficult to penetrate the origin of the errors which obscured the vast horizon that they opened. These errors originated in their confusion of the absolute and the relative, the necessary and the better, the evident and the probable, perfection and perfectibility. They seized the law of progress for an instant, then lost it by endeavoring to embody it in facts in an immutable form. What could be more rash than to undertake to realize, once for all, *the government of Nature, the necessary laws, evidence?* None but God fully knows *physiocracy*. God has given to man only the faculty of discerning successively the light which he needs in order to advance step by step in his long road through the ages. To the economists belongs the glory of perceiving great laws; but these laws are designed to be applied not to purely physical phenomena, but to free and impassioned beings: they are, besides, designed to be combined in the real world with other not less essential laws, — the laws which divide the human race into distinct nationalities. Altogether incontestable as their abstract evidence may be, their application, modified by elements of another nature, can never, therefore, be effected, except according to the wholly contingent rules of probability.

Digitized by Google

It is chimerical to pretend to apply *evidence* to government, and to seek its absolute type,[1] when the boldest political philosophers, Rousseau himself, acknowledge government modifiable according to times and places. The political science of the economists is the annihilation of all science and all political experiment. The admirable studies of Montesquieu and Rousseau are to them null and void. Their formula of government, in its inconceivable naïveté, is summed up in one sentence, — despotism tempered by a madhouse: a very different despotism, it must be admitted, from that of Louis XIV. and all known despots; for with them, the *government of evidence* once well defined and well constituted, the prince who should do violence in any way to property, including individual liberty and all its applications, would *evidently* be mad, and would be no longer entitled to obedience.

There is in their *rational despotism* more than an abuse of logic: there is a lack of logic. They were certainly hurried away, unknowingly perhaps, both by the old monarchical habits, and the desire to convert the established power; for, had they reasoned with full independence and full rigor, they would have arrived, not at despotism, but at unlimited political liberty, or rather at *anarchy*, in the etymological sense of the word. What would be the use of a government if we were in possession of *evidence*, — if *pure reason* reigned among men? It would only be necessary to have schools to instruct the rising generation in *evidence*, and a marshalsea to put the madmen who might attack *evidence* in a condition to do no harm. Eminent economists of the following period, more consistent than Quesnai, Dupont de Nemours, or Lemercier de La Rivière, if they did not reach this extremity indeed, at least arrived at the point of considering government as a *necessary evil*, the action of which should be restricted within the narrowest possible limits. These are the very words of Jean-Baptiste Say.

It was again by the confusion of the absolute and the relative, by the exclusive investigation of a single phase of truth, that the economists, who had just before proclaimed despotism, at least in words, came to the point of disregarding the rights and interests of the State. "To imagine," said Turgot, "that there are some articles which the State should strive to make the earth pro-

[1] This type, according to them, was realized four thousand years ago in China; and they trusted that a *great empress* was about to offer a second example in Russia! — See Dupont de Nemours, *Origine et progrès d'une science nouvelle;* ap. *Physiocrates*, part i. p. 364.

Digitized by Google

duce rather than others, that it should establish certain manufactures rather than others, and, in consequence, prohibit certain productions while ordering others, . . . establish certain manufactures at the expense of the public treasury, and heap privileges and favors upon them, is grossly to mistake the true advantages of commerce: it is to forget, that as no commercial operation can be any thing but reciprocal, to desire to sell every thing to foreigners, and to buy nothing from them, is absurd. We only gain by producing one commodity rather than another, inasmuch as this commodity brings more money, after deducting all expenses, to him who produced it from his land or manufactured it. The market value of each commodity, therefore, all expenses deducted, is the only rule by which to judge of the advantage derived by the State from a certain species of production: consequently, every kind of manufacture which does not indemnify with a profit the costs which it requires is of no advantage, and the sums which are employed in supporting it, despite the natural course of commerce, are a tax imposed upon the nation to no purpose."[1]

These principles are very true abstractly in an economic point of view; but as economy must necessarily be combined with politics, their literal application may be erroneous and perilous in certain cases. It may be to the interest of the State not to be dependent upon another State for certain commodities or merchandise; and it may be, that, in increasing its safety by the measures which it takes to secure the national production of this merchandise, it indirectly owes happy economic results to measures contrary to the general principles of economy. The State likewise effects a bad economic operation as to direct production by establishing certain costly manufactures; but if these manufactures develop taste, and give a useful impulse and example to industry, the State will derive advantage from it. Again: in the same manner, a great State should secure a marine at any price: if differential duties are temporarily necessary for this, it acts rightly in establishing or maintaining them.

Concerning the important questions of wealth, taxation, and the hierarchy of the social classes, the economists err by drawing arbitrary conclusions from a hackneyed axiom, by a specious and subtle mode of deduction. Because the earth, fructified by the labor of man, is the source of all wealth,[2] to conclude that manu-

[1] *Éloge de Gournai*; ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 274; Guillaumin, 1844.

[2] *Matter*, and not *the earth*, should be said; for the axiom is false, taken literally. Fishery is a source of wealth, as well as *husbandry* and *pasturage*.

Digitized by Google

factures add no value to this first value, that the industrial and commercial classes are sterile, and that taxation should be levied on the income from real estate alone, is, in reality, to sacrifice that landed property which is glorified to those manufactures which are disparaged. The net revenue, in common parlance, the language of good sense, is not the income from real estate, but all revenue, all profit that exceeds the cost of labor, including in the cost the subsistence of the laborer. The net revenue, whatever may be its origin, may be lawfully subjected to taxation.[1] As to the distinction between the productive class and the sterile class, a single observation suffices to show all its chimericalness. The man that buys and the man that drives the plough would belong to the productive class; the man that manufactures it, to the sterile class! Quesnai and all the school fall far behind Gournai, who gave perfectly sound definitions on these subjects. "The only real riches of the State," he said, "are the annual yield of its lands, and the manufactures of its inhabitants. A workman who manufactures a piece of cloth adds real wealth to the mass of the wealth of the State. The sum which the State may annually apply to its needs is always an aliquot part of the sum of the revenues which are annually produced in the State; and the sum of these revenues is composed of the net revenue of each estate, and the product of the manufacture of each individual."

Gournai, however, strange to say, was induced to share Quesnai's opinion, that the taxes are always paid by the landed proprietor in the end, and that taxation should be levied exclusively on real estate. He was not consistent with his doctrine concerning the reality of the wealth produced by manufactures. This inconsistency was not rectified in the French economic school: the honor thereof belongs to a foreigner, the illustrious Adam Smith. The Scotch philosopher, adopted by the French economists of the following generation, showed the principle of value in the labor of man, whether applied immediately or not to the soil; reëstablished in principle, in the new science, the equal fruitfulness of the different applications of labor and the legitimate participation of the different kinds of revenue in the burdens of the State; and ad-

[1] It is incorrect to say that the holder of floating capital can *always* find, in the increase of the interest on his money, a compensation for the tax required of him by the State. The capitalist does not *always* dictate the law to the borrower, any more than the contractor *always* dictates the law to those in his pay. This depends on a variable proportion between the supply and the demand.

[2] *Éloge de Gournai*; ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. pp. 266, 273, 274.

Digitized by Google

mitted lastly, in certain limits, the modification of economic principles for reasons of State.[1]

Quesnai and his disciples also professed dangerous maxims concerning large farming, foreign commerce, and wages. They extolled large farming exclusively, and the system of minimum labor; yet this system has depopulated the rural districts of England to accumulate an immense population in the cities! They pretended that foreign and maritime commerce is not profitable to a nation; that the wealth of the merchants is not national wealth: yet the English merchants have saved England half a score of times with their riches! The interest of society does not consist in deriving the largest possible revenue from the soil so much as in causing the greatest possible number of men to live from the soil and on the soil.[2] The strongest community is that in which small farmers, sufficiently enlightened to combine their labor in certain cases and on certain lands, are the prevailing element.[3] It is needless to say that this element, nevertheless, should be counterbalanced by a sufficient body of manufacturers, who would exchange their manufactures for the products of the soil. The sentiment of Quesnai was correct in this respect, though his formulas were bad; for he admits that the agriculturists should be in the proportion of two to one to the merchants and manufacturers, in a well-constituted state of society.

As to wages, Quesnai and Turgot claim that the mechanic does not produce more than his subsistence, which logically leads to

[1] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (published in England in 1776, and translated into French in 1781).

[2] The axiom of Quesnai, moreover, is arbitrary: the reciprocal advantages of large and small farming counterbalance each other in conformity with all kinds of moral and physical circumstances. The excellent studies of M. H. Passy may be consulted on this subject.

[3] Rousseau had rightly seen this; and a singular man, a compound of the innovating and the retrogressive and feudal spirit, who had commenced an outline of political economy on his own account at the same time with Gournai and Quesnai, the Marquis de Mirabeau, had at first preached small farming in conformity with the traditions and habits of the French rural districts; but he was converted by Quesnai, and thenceforth employed himself in diluting the common doctrines of the school in an immense, confused medley, interspersed with many luminous flashes which no one has the courage to seek therein to-day. From this chaos was to be born the great Mirabeau, the pupil and victim of a father who was the *friend of men* in general, and the tyrant of his family in particular. The works of the Marquis de Mirabeau most quoted are the *l'Ami des hommes* (1756); the *Théorie de l'impôt* (1760), which cost him a brief imprisonment in the Bastille; and the *Philosophie rurale* (1763). As to the theory of *dear bread*, it should not be imputed as a reproach to Quesnai: he only meant thereby that the price of grain should not be artificially lowered, and the agricultural producer prevented from obtaining a just remuneration.

Digitized by Google

granting him no more than he produces; and they maintain, that in point of fact, through competition, he will never earn much beyond his mere subsistence. The principle is false, and the result would be an act of social iniquity. It is not only humanity, but strict justice, which demands that the mechanic shall earn more than his subsistence. Has not he, too, made advances, which should be refunded to him in wages? — the advance of the time and subsistence expended in learning his trade, and waiting for work, the advance for tools, etc. The maxims of the first economists, rigorously carried out, would react from the mechanic upon the husbandman, from the master-manufacturer upon the master-agriculturist himself, and would end in concentrating in the hands of the land-owner all the surplus of the production over the consumption. Nothing was certainly farther from their intentions; but they had become involved, by their unhappy definition of wealth, in a vicious circle, from which escape was impossible. "The poorest citizens should possess a competence," says Quesnai, "in order that they may be able to consume, and to aid reproduction by consumption." This is evident, but contrary to the preceding propositions. At the bottom, these just and humane men were devoted to the interests of the masses. Gournai, Quesnai, and Turgot were convinced that the systems opposed to economic liberty, to the free use of the individual faculties, "always favor the wealthy and indolent portion of the community, to the detriment of the poor and laborious portion." Dupont de Nemours went so far as to say that men are much more unfortunate in badly organized systems of civilization, in which the natural laws are disregarded, than they were in the primitive state of association, because, in these imperfectly civilized communities, the small number of the rich unceasingly makes inroads upon the property of the great number of the poor.[1]

[1] *Physiocratie; Discours de l'éditeur*, p. 33. An important fact proves how far these energetic defenders of property were from wishing to sacrifice the interests of the masses to those of the land-owners. In 1789, when the gratuitous abolition of the tithes was proposed, Dupont de Nemours, the commentator and successor of Quesnai, rose, by the side of Sieyès, to dissuade the Assembly from making this immense gift to the land-owners at the expense of the nation, and demanded the redemption of the tithes, and the appropriation of the price of this redemption to purposes of social interest. Dupont desired this to be devoted to the payment of the debts of the State. We do not think that this was the most legitimate use of it. The property of the Church was originally the property of the poor, the great common property of the Christians. It was just to restore it to its destination, and to make the tithes the budget of the lower classes, the endowment for primary instruction and public assistance, the foundation of a fund for the needy and superannuated, and for all the measures destined to lessen the effects of the inevitable inequality of property.

Digitized by Google

We have attempted to analyze the doctrines of the physiocrats: we shall presently find them attempting to convert their ideas into realities, and to prevent the approaching era of revolution by a peaceful transformation. Before resuming the narrative of the last years of the monarchy, we will pause for a few moments at a man who was to direct this attempt at reform, and to be the principal glory of the economic school, but who, without being exempt from errors, too great to be wholly absorbed by any sect, attached himself at once to all that was good and true in the different tendencies of the eighteenth century. Turgot, the statesman of the economists, was distinguished from his fellows, not because he deemed their theory too bold; but because, on the contrary, he possessed a broader theory. Like them, he admitted complete liberty in the individual, and unity in the ruling power; but he did not apprehend this unity under a single, and, what was worse, an inferior form. He was not one to adopt a chain of reasoning ending in the odious deduction of despotism. He did not believe it possible to realize, at a single stroke and forever, the indefinite progress of the human race. *Evidence*, that mathematical vision of the economists, was transformed in him into an enlightened faith in the improvement of reason. Turgot was not, doubtless, the strongest and most intelligent genius, but he was perhaps the most comprehensive mind, of all the eighteenth century. The other economists, despite their pretensions to general philosophy, were specialists: he was a philosopher in every acceptation of the word, a man of perfect sight. Something altogether essential to the history of modern ideas would be lacking if we did not study the philosopher in Turgot before following the politician through the course of events. One of the first places in the imposing gallery of the eighteenth century belongs to this beautiful and noble figure, at once so sympathetic and so austere, so placid and so energetic. After so many and such brilliant discussions, the most general conclusion was given by Turgot.

The youngest of the great thinkers of the age, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot, was born at Paris, May 10, 1727, of a father who had long honorably filled the office of *prévôt-des-marchands*.[1] Destined at first for the Church, he was transferred from the Jesuits of Louis-le-Grand to the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, then to the Sorbonne. A mature man in childhood, he was already what he

[1] It was the *prévôt* Michel Turgot that constructed the great sewer on the right bank; rebuilt the Pont au Change of stone; engraved the great plan of Paris, a masterpiece of its kind, &c.

Digitized by Google

was to be throughout his life. Alike removed from a blind submission to the belief of his masters and a blind reaction against all belief, he had, from his earliest youth, but two cares, the public good and science, — science in its universality. At twenty-one (1748), he addressed to Buffon the objections of a profound physicist to certain parts of his still unpublished system; at twenty-two (1749), before knowing Gournai or Quesnai, he wrote to one of his friends upon one of the most important questions of political economy, paper-money, a letter which unanswerably refuted the theory of Law, in which he showed the essential difference between metallic currency, a value which is the common standard of other values, and the money of credit, — a simple sign, a mere promise, without intrinsic value; and proved the absurdity of a system which undertook to replace taxation by periodical issues of paper-money, the speedy depreciation of this money, and all the disorder that would ensue. After this letter, the compulsory currency of paper-money might still be supported as a *political* measure in certain extraordinary cases; but it was impossible to support it as an *economic* measure.

The year after (1750), he delivered, in the capacity of Prior of the Sorbonne, two discourses such as these Gothic arches had never heard: not that they caused the noise and scandal made shortly afterwards by the Abbé de Prades; but they were the philosophy of history, shedding a serene light on the obscure refuge of scholasticism.

The first of these discourses set forth "the advantages which the establishment of Christianity has procured for the human race." These were the moral amelioration of man and society; the progress of humanity and justice in private, public, and international relations; and the introduction of the principle of the love of God into the world.[1] He refuted in advance Rousseau's exaggerated admiration of the wholly artificial society of Sparta, and criticised the legislators who had rendered permanent the errors of their age by seeking to make their laws irrevocable, and who had almost all neglected to make arrangements for necessary corrections, leaving no other resource than that of revolution.

[1] Christianity has greatly developed this principle, and made it the very groundwork of religion: but Turgot's assertion is nevertheless too absolute; the love of God must not be wholly denied to antiquity. Turgot does not say a word that he did not think; but, in the presence of the Sorbonne, he could not say all that he thought. "I recognize," he wrote elsewhere, "the good that Christianity has done the world; but the greatest of its blessings has been the enlightenment and propagation of natural religion." — *Lettres sur la Tolérance*, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 687.

Digitized by Google

This was the condemnation of all constitutions which did not contain within themselves provisions for their amendment.

The second discourse had for its subject "the successive progress of the human mind." This was the historical elaboration of the great speech of Pascal. But Turgot did not limit indefinite progress to knowledge: he extended it to human morality, thus protesting against the negation of Rousseau at the very moment when it was enunciated by the latter. Turgot made an exception only with respect to the fine arts. "The knowledge of nature and truth is infinite, like themselves. The arts, the object of which is to please us, are limited like us: they have a fixed point of perfection determined by the genius of languages, the imitation of Nature, and the sensibility of our organs." Nevertheless, he admits that poetry, perfect among the ancients as to imagery and style, is susceptible of continual progress on other points. It is the same with the other arts: their domain extends with man himself.

We cannot behold without admiration this seminarist of twenty-three tracing with a bold hand the sketch of universal history, no longer in view of special tradition, like Bossuet, but of the whole human race, like Voltaire, and with a dignity and moral authority in which Voltaire was too often lacking. The *Essay on the Manners of Nations* was still unpublished in 1750: it is necessary to remember this to authenticate the originality of Turgot's work. The only serious objection to be made to Turgot is, that, influenced by the metaphysics of sensation, he saw in progress too much the result of external phenomena, and not enough the manifestation of the internal energies of man.

Immense plans were in agitation in this youthful brain: he wished to elaborate every thing contained in the germ in his two discourses; he wished to rewrite the *Universal History* of Bossuet in the philosophic point of view, and to make it only the first part of a vast whole, including besides a *Treatise on Political Geography* and a *Treatise on Government*; he wished to show "the human race always the same in its convulsions, like the waters of the sea, and continually advancing towards perfection."

We possess detailed plans of the first two parts. In the *Political Geography*, he makes very great, even excessive reservations, in opposition to the principle of Montesquieu touching the *influence of climate;* "an unknown influence," he says. "We must have exhausted moral causes to have a right to assert any thing

Digitized by Google

concerning the physical influence of climate."[1] He clearly perceives Montesquieu's error with respect to the *excessive population* of the barbarous North. He throws out grand views concerning the means which should be sought by the human race to derive the greatest possible advantage from our globe by the combination of the different principles which compose the soil (mineral fertilizers), the distribution of waters, etc.

The sketch of the *Universal History* is marked with the boldest optimism. "It is well that the passions reigned before reason in politics; for reason would have been less powerful had it reigned sooner. As it is justice itself, it would have prevented war, and, with war, the formation of great States, and consequently the progress of ideas, arts, and *polity*, or the art of government. The human race would forever have remained in mediocrity. Reason and justice would have rendered every thing immutable. Now, what is never perfect should never be entirely immutable. The stormy and dangerous passions have become a source of action, and consequently of progress. Every thing that draws men from their condition, every thing that places varied scenes before their eyes, extends their ideas, enlightens them, animates them, and, in the end, leads them to goodness and truth, to which they are attracted by their natural inclination. The universe, thus viewed as a whole, in all the connection and extent of its progress, is the most glorious spectacle to the Wisdom that presides over it."

There is nothing greater in the eighteenth century than this argument between Turgot and Rousseau on the destiny of the human race.

In every line are met sagacious and profound glances at the principal phenomena of history. "The inequality between the sexes is in proportion to the barbarism: it is extreme in despotic States. The condition of women is improved in republics. It is in petty States and republics that the science of government is

[1] It is in this same sketch that the following passage is found: "Every nation that outstrips the rest in its progress becomes a kind of centre, around which a political world, so to speak, gathers, composed of the nations known to it, and whose interests combine with its own. Several of these worlds are formed throughout the extent of the globe, independent of each other, and mutually unknown. In spreading continually on all sides, they encounter and become confounded with each other, until finally the knowledge of the whole universe, the political science of which will succeed in combining all the parts, will form but a single political world, the limits of which will be blended with those of the physical world."

This is all history summed up in a few lines! — *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 616.

Digitized by Google

formed, that equality is preserved, that the human mind makes rapid progress," etc.

The equality of rights is here in question; for elsewhere he justifies as a condition of progress, and without disregarding its fatal consequences in so many respects, the social inequality produced by the division of labor. He acknowleges, however, that this necessary division makes it impossible for the majority of mankind, occupied with obscure and rude labor, to follow the progress of other men. This is the terrible problem which he does not solve, and the strongest argument of Rousseau. It is this social inequality, which, after having effected the progress of enlightenment, oftenest at the expense of justice, prevents this progress from being fruitful to mankind in general, puts obstacles in the way of the maintenance or establishment of political liberty and equality,[1] and too often produces or brings back despotism; an inequality which will some time, perhaps, find its remedy in what aggravates it to-day, — the extension of man's means of action upon Nature. Machinery, which subjugates man, may one day enfranchise him.

A last page is characteristic, — the picture of the difficult duties of the legislator in the existing state of Europe. Nevertheless, he concludes, "It is so true that the interests of nations and the success of a good government may be reduced to a religious respect for personal liberty and labor, the inviolable preservation of the rights of property, and justice for all, . . . that there is reason to hope that the science of government will one day become easy. . . . The tour of the (political) world is yet to be made: truth is on the way; and glory, and the happiness of being useful, are at the end."

The destiny of Turgot is found in this page: he was to attempt to become this legislator.

We have seen Turgot opposing, partially in advance, the two *Dissertations* of Rousseau. In a letter addressed to a female author, Madame de Graffigni, and which was not designed for publicity, he, on the contrary, surpasses *Émile:* he attacks the inverted system of education, which begins with abstractions, and which fetters the children whom Nature attracts to herself by every means. "Put children in the midst of Nature," he exclaims in these few pages, in which he seems to sum up the first idea of the immortal work of the Genevese (1751). On marriages

[1] "Liberty," I say with a sigh, "men are not perhaps worthy of thee! Equality, they desire, but can never attain thee!" — *Lettre à madame de Graffigni*, 1751, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 786.

Digitized by Google

of interest, maxims opposed to marriages of *inclination*, and other prejudices of this kind, which are prejudicial to morals and the family, and, in general, on every thing relating to morality or sentiment, we seem to be listening to Rousseau.[1]

Other private letters, happily preserved, and which are true dogmatic treatises, show the groundwork of the youthful sage's ideas concerning the rights and duties of the State with respect to religion. These are the *Letters on Tolerance* (1753-1754), an improper title; for the liberty of creeds is not to him *tolerance*, but positive right. No religion, according to him, has a right to the exclusive protection of the State: all have a right to liberty, unless their dogmas or forms of worship are contrary to the interests of the State. He hastens to explain this restriction, which might easily be abused, by saying that a dogma should be tolerated, even though it be somewhat contrary to the good of the State, provided that it is not subversive of the foundation of society. A false religion will fall sooner by the progress of reason and peaceful investigation than by persecution, which rouses its believers to fanaticism: its ministers, at least, will be forced to become inconsistent, and to soften their dogmas to such a degree as to render them harmless. He thus corrects in advance the exaggerations of the *Social Contract*, which would prescribe the application to intolerant creeds of their own maxims, and their expulsion from the State.

After affirming that society, founded with a view to the common interests of men during the present life, has neither a right to impose on its members a rule or religion with a view to the future life, nor to interdict it to them, except in the case before cited, he admits, however, that society owes to the people a religious education, and that it is wisdom in legislators to choose a system of religion to offer, not to prescribe, to the uncertainty of the majority of men, while protecting the full liberty of other sects. He seeks the conditions which should be presented by this religion of State; does not find them in Roman Catholicism: doubts whether Protestantism, even Arminianism, although preferable in political respects, altogether fulfils them as yet; and asks whether natural religion, formed into a system and accom-

[1] And also on the limits of paternal rights. "In things in which the happiness of children is in question, the duties of fathers are confined to simple advice. It is the contrary way of thinking that has made so many unhappy *for their own good*, produced so many forced marriages, to say nothing of vocations, etc. — See the second *Letter on Tolerance*. The civil code has realized Turgot's idea.

Digitized by Google

panied with a form of worship, in defending less ground, would not be more unassailable.[1]

Here Turgot, in his turn, exceeds the limits which Rousseau would set, and which are the true ones. Society owes instruction to children as it owes justice to men: it holds from God, its first author, since he made man social, the right and duty of taking, for the basis of its instruction and laws, *natural* religion; that is, the religious morality and general beliefs which are the very foundation of the human conscience and the foundation of order in this world: but it is not competent to establish a positive religion, a form of worship with priests and rites, for the purpose of giving a definite form to religious feeling. This exceeds the domain of public right: it needs a mysterious inspiration which is not at the disposal of the body politic.

Never were the principles of right, justice, and liberty, more nobly expressed than in the second of these *Letters*. Never was all right more proudly denied to positive laws which are contrary to equity. "Intolerance is tyranny, and exceeds the right of the prince, like all unjust laws. If the subjects of an intolerant prince, as of any other tyrant, are able to resist him, their rebellion is just. The principle that nothing should limit the rights of society over the individual, except the greatest good of society, appears to me false and dangerous. Every man is born free: and it is never lawful to fetter this liberty, unless it degenerates into license; that is, unless it ceases to be liberty by becoming usurpation. The different kinds of liberty, like the different kinds of property, are limited by each other. The liberty of acting without injury to another can only be restricted by tyrannical laws. Governments are too much in the habit always of sacrificing the happiness of individuals to the pretended rights of society. It is forgotten that society was made for individuals; that it was instituted only to protect the rights of all by insuring the accomplishment of all the mutual duties."[2]

[1] Compare this with the correspondence between Voltaire and Frederick, of 1766, on the *possibility of a deistical religion*.

[2] In a letter written long after, he attacks "the falsity of that hackneyed notion of almost all republican writers, that liberty consists in being submissive to the laws alone, as if a man oppressed by an unjust law were free."

This *notion* is relatively true if the despotic State, in which one man is subject to another, is compared with the republican State, in which he is subject only to a general and abstract law; but it is absolutely true only where the *positive laws* are in conformity with the eternal laws. — See the letter to Dr. Price, 1778; ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 806.

Digitized by Google

There was a broad chasm between contemporaneous facts and the theories of Turgot. The young philosopher, with the generous confidence which always characterized him, did not believe it impossible to fill up this gulf. In 1754, in the height of the strife of the *certificates of confession*, among the quarrels of the parliament and the clergy, and the renewed persecutions of the Protestants, he printed anonymously a work entitled *The Conciliator*, which he sent to the councillors of State and the ministers, and caused to reach the King. He showed therein nothing of his principles but what was necessary for the practical end that he was pursuing. He made a distinction between ecclesiastical tolerance, which he acknowledged it to be impossible to require from priests, and civil tolerance, which he demanded as necessary from governments. The Prince, he said, is not the judge of sins towards God, but only of offences towards society. He desired, on the one hand, that the Protestants and the Jansenists should be tolerated, and that no difference should be made between them and other citizens; and, on the other, that the priests should not be forced to administer the sacraments against their will, but that, in order to be able to restore this liberty to the priests, the sacraments should be deprived of all civil value, and the authentication of births, marriages, and burials, should become independent of religious ceremonies. He demanded, in a word, before Voltaire, that foundation of the *civil status* which was to be realized by the institutions emanating from 1789.

It did not belong to the government of Louis XV. to accomplish such things: a feeble attempt at religious pacification in 1754 alone seemed to coincide with the work of Turgot.

Meanwhile, Turgot became associated in the *Encyclopædia* (about 1755). All his articles therein on widely different subjects, philology, metaphysics, physics, and public law, belong to the first rank in this vast collection. He displays profound knowledge, and views as ingenious as sagacious concerning the origin, mingling, and revolutions of languages (art. *Etymology*): in the article *Existence*, as in every thing of his which touches on metaphysics, without explicitly going beyond Condillac, he manifests tendencies analogous to those of Rousseau, which, had he applied his firm and lucid intellect more especially to the science of principles, would have probably led him to the point reached by La Romiguière half a century later. The article *Expansibility* contains, according to a competent judge, Condorcet, "a new system of physics, a system of mathematical physics founded on the principles and discoveries

Digitized by Google

of Newton." [1] The article *Foundation* shows the theorist of liberty as firm concerning the true rights of the State as those of the individual. He sweeps away the sophisms by which it is attempted to transform fictitious beings, corporations, into proprietors, as if property were any thing else than an outgrowth of individuality, and as if there were room for a third right between the right of the individual and the right of society.[2] The government, he says, has an incontestable right "to dispose of ancient foundations, to appropriate their funds to new objects, or, still better, to abolish them altogether. Public utility is the highest law, and should not be weighed in the scale either with a superstitious respect for what is called *the intention of the founders* (as if ignorant and narrow individuals had a right to bind unborn generations by their capricious will), or by the fear of encroaching on the pretended rights of certain bodies; as if private bodies had any rights in opposition to the State. The citizens have rights, and sacred rights, as to the body of society itself; they exist independently of it; they are its necessary elements, and they enter it only to place themselves, with all their rights, under the protection of those same laws which insure their property and liberty. But private bodies exist neither by themselves nor for them: they have been formed for society, and they should cease to exist the moment that they cease to be useful."

Such were the principles laid down: the Revolution had only to put them into practice.

Turgot did not continue his coöperation with the *Encyclopædia* to the end. The persecution which was renewed against this great work in 1759 arrested him. His manly courage and steadfast will shield him from all suspicion of weakness. If he was unwilling to become more deeply involved in the philosophic strife,[3] it was be-

[1] He very clearly perceives here the use that may be made of steam, and this before the great applications of it by Watt.

[2] The only collective being which is in a separate category is society, because its existence is necessary and perpetual, and because it is the only partnership which should never become dissolved or settle its affairs. The jurists of the monarchy had, at heart, the same opinion: they recognized in law but two kinds of property, that of the State and that of individuals. "Ecclesiastics and other members of mortmain corporations have been in all ages reputed incapable of possessing any kind of real estate in our kingdom: it was this that gave the kings, our predecessors, reason to subject them to amortization-duties, to redeem them from this incapacity." — Ordinance of October 14, 1703, cited by M. Laferriere, *Hist. du droit français*, t. II. p. 40.

[3] He clearly proved to his friends that he had not abandoned them, when, in 1767, the Sorbonne took a fancy to condemn Marmontel's *Belisarius* for propositions opposed to religious persecution. Of all the blows dealt on this occasion to the Sorbonne, the

Digitized by Google

cause he deemed himself called upon to render greater services in another character than that of a writer. The noble passion for action, the only passion that he had known, took possession of him; and he aspired already, perhaps, in his secret thoughts, to attempt to arrest the monarchy in its decline. As early as 1751, although the younger son of a noble Norman family, and consequently without fortune,[1] he had renounced the dignities and wealth which seemed promised him in the ecclesiastical profession. He was not a man to weigh his conscience and his fortune against each other. His virtuous ambition opened for him another path. He made the magistracy a stepping-stone to the council of State. Made master of requests in 1753, he was appointed, in 1761, to the intendency of Limousin, where he was enabled to make a trial at leisure of his faculties for statesmanship, and to prepare himself for a mission more brilliant, but not more worthy of respect; for he was for thirteen years the benefactor of this province, where he presented the true ideal of an administrator.

His love of science and literature never cooled; but he was forced to abandon his vast historical and philosophical plans. He concentrated his theoretical labors upon a single branch of science, political economy, in which he thought that he saw a great chance of safety for the decaying system of society. His *Reflections on the Formation and Distribution of Wealth* appeared in 1769. This was the best written and the most lasting of all the books produced by the French economists. Save on the point, essential, it is true, of the *productiveness* of industrial labor, Turgot laid down all the principles that were to be elaborated by Adam Smith. His *Memorial on the Loaning of Money*, 1769, treated in detail of the question of interest already decided in the preceding work. He unanswerably refuted the doctrines of the scholastic theologians, adopted by the jurists under the pressure of the canon law, and their subtleties ending in the absurd expedient of the creation of annuities and the alienation of capital:[2] he showed

rudest was that of its former fellow Turgot. He set opposite each other, in two parallel columns, the propositions censured by the Sorbonne and the opposite propositions, the tacit approval of which by the Sorbonne followed from the condemnation of the others. It was impossible to imagine any thing more odious or absurd. — See *Mém. de Marmontel*, t. III. p. 45.

[1] The right of primogenitureship was very rigorously maintained in the local law of Normandy.

[2] This system was one of the causes of the commercial and industrial inferiority of Catholic countries. The absurdity consisted in this, that, if interest was not lawful, the borrower at five per cent should have been released at the expiration of twenty years: perpetual annuities were, in this case, perpetual usury from the day when the

Digitized by Google

how the laws against loans at interest were circumvented, eluded, and overthrown by the force of circumstances; and made a clear distinction between the question of beneficence and Christian charity, and that of property, right, and liberty,—two domains of truth, not contrary, but distinct. The problem has been and is still discussed anew, with more warmth and obstinacy than ever. Powerful dialecticians have sought arguments to oppose to those of Turgot and his school in natural and social right, and in political economy turned against itself; but they have not succeeded in proving that it is possible to abolish loans at interest without dealing a death-blow to freedom of business transactions and the formation of capital, and consequently to the national wealth, and without attacking the essence of property.

As to the limitation of the rate of interest by law, Turgot and the other economists condemned all interference of the State, and it is difficult to deny the theoretical value of their sentence; but it is equally difficult not to perceive that the legislation which maintains the limitation of interest according to an approximate average has few practical objections, or, at least, that its abolition would, perhaps, long present much more serious objections.

Among the economic works of Turgot must also be cited his admirable *Memorial on Mines and Quarries*, in which he shows himself alike superior both to the legislation of his times, and, at least with respect to logic, to that which was to replace it.[1]

borrower had reimbursed the capital in annual instalments. It is strange to see what may be the empire of tradition, even over good minds. Pothier, so learned, so upright, and so enlightened in so many other respects, but timid in every thing bordering on theology, showed incredible weakness on this subject, and found nothing but truly *Sorbonnic* quibbles.

[1] Ancient legislation, in accordance with the Roman imperial law, reserved the ownership of mines to the crown, as a royal right: in point of fact, the State did not work them, but granted monopolies of them with all the usual abuses. The present legislation begins by laying down the fictitious principle, that the ownership of the soil carries with it the ownership of whatever is above and below the surface (Civil Code, art. 552); then, in the special law concerning mines (the law of 1810), reduces this ownership, which it has just exaggerated so strangely in theory, to very little in practice, in behalf of the State. Turgot, with altogether different logic, asserts that there is no natural relation between the ownership of a field and that of a mine beneath it; that the owner has the exclusive right of making excavations in his own field, but that, if he finds a mine, it belongs to him, not as the extension of his property, but through his right as the first occupant; and that if he is anticipated in this occupancy by another excavation commenced in another field, and continued under his own by a subterranean way, he cannot protest against it.

Relatively to the State, it is the same below as above the surface. Society may continue the joint possession of the surface; it may continue the joint possession of the estate: but, so long as it has not done this by positive law, the right of the first occupant is

Digitized by Google

Turgot would employ the closing years of the reign of Louis XV. in beginning the application of his doctrines, according to his power, on a small scale, and in striving to imbue the central government with this influence. The thinker and the practical man were combined in him: we shall soon find also the politician contending with events. The thinker is comprised entire in the two words, *liberty* and *perfectibility*. We shall have occasion to recur to the hiatus which existed in the application of his doctrine to political liberty,—an hiatus much less, however, than in the other economists. As to perfectibility, his friend and disciple Condorcet has summed up his ideas in a few lines: "Turgot regarded indefinite perfectibility as one of the distinctive qualities of the human species. . . . This perfectibility appeared to him to belong to the human race in general, and to each individual in particular. He believed, for instance, that the progress of physical knowledge, of education, and of method in the sciences, or the discovery of new methods, would contribute to improve the organization, and to render men capable of retaining more ideas in their memory, and of multiplying the combinations of these ideas. He believed that their moral sense was equally susceptible of improvement. According to these principles, all truths useful to mankind would, in the end, be known and adopted by all men; and all the old errors would be destroyed by degrees, and be replaced by new truths. This progress, constantly increasing from age to age, has no limit, or one that it is absolutely impossible to fix in our present state of enlightenment. He was convinced that the improvement of order and society would necessarily produce an improvement not less important in morality; that men would continually become better in proportion as they were more enlightened."[1]

To sum up Turgot completely, it is necessary to sum up all the ideas of the age. In tolerance and humanity, he was Voltaire; in religion, morality, and education, he was Rousseau; in political economy, he was Gournai and Quesnai: in liberty, he was Voltaire, and, with him, again Gournai and Quesnai; in metaphysics, he was Condillac, with a higher tendency; in perfectibility, he was more and better than Voltaire and Diderot,—he was the only one that seriously responded to Rousseau. Rousseau strengthened the faith of the individual man in his immortal destinies, but dis-

the most natural, provided that this first occupant gives the necessary guarantees to society. It is needless to say that the State retains, with respect to the first occupant and the owner of the surface, the exceptional right of expropriation for public use.

[1] Condorcet, *Vie de Turgot*, p. 273.

Digitized by Google

turbed the social man by pointing out to him moral decay in intellectual and material progress. Turgot, without by any means solving all the profound objections of Rousseau, consoled and reassured men. He gave the perfectibility of the encyclopedists the only firm basis by uniting it with the spiritualistic Deism of Rousseau, and thus found the point of union between the two opposite schools.[1] A less brilliant, less impetuous, but more universal genius than his great contemporaries, he marked the culmination of the human mind in the eighteenth century, and closed that philosophic age with a hymn of hope and immortality over the already yawning grave of ancient society!

Turgot was inferior only on a single point,—politics proper: on the one hand, the principle of the unproductiveness of manufactures led him to disregard the political rights of those who were not land-owners; on the other hand, after the example of his friends the economists, he disregarded the essential distinctions laid down by Montesquieu and Rousseau, and copied what may be called the national error of D'Argenson in confounding the unity of the ruling power with the unity of sovereignty.[2] His excessive confidence in the empire of reason, goodness, and justice, prevented him from seeing how incompatible this unity is with liberty. He, who cherished liberty before all things, offered fewer practical means of securing it than Rousseau, who has been reproached with sacrificing it to equality.

The glory of Turgot, as a whole, belongs only to France and to philosophy: nevertheless, part of this glory was common to him and his masters of the economic group. The respect of posterity is justly due to the men who propounded these great maxims:—

It does not belong to the government to make laws, but only to recognize the natural laws.

That is to say, the function of society, like that of man, is to accept and voluntarily concur in the laws of Providence.

No human authority has a right to do violence to Nature.

That is to say, every law contrary to Nature, to justice, to morality, and to the revelation of God in the human conscience,—every law contrary to *law* is lawfully null and void. There can be no right contrary to right.

[1] The problem of perfectibility does not find its solution, indeed, any more than that of optimism, in this isolated, present life. The encyclopedists were unable to solve it; they who saw only the perfectibility of the species in this world, and not the perfectibility of the individual soul in the future life.

[2] See his letter to Dr. Price, 1778.

Digitized by Google

They mingled errors with the truths which they proclaimed, all of which were not shared by Turgot. Deluded by their chimera of *evidence*, they did not see that political liberty and equality are the condition of all other liberties; and their denial of political science, and the formula of governmental despotism so strangely invented by these champions of economic liberty, were a fatal example to the sects that have since taken up social questions from the point of view opposed to *liberal* economy, and that have too often shown an indifference to political liberty more logical in fatalistic schools than in a school of free personality.

They were mistaken in imagining it possible to attain the absolute; but they none the less determined the end towards which society was progressively to advance. If, in fact, it is asked, "Are we to aspire to economic liberty or to restrictions, to peaceful free trade, or to the contention of tariffs, the parent of commercial warfare,[1] to harmony or antagonism?" can the reply be doubtful? It is with universal free trade as with universal peace: each is an ideal, and not a chimera; a final end, which we are to seek to approach as nearly as possible, although we are never destined, perhaps, to attain it completely.

The economists were right in desiring liberty: it may even be said that they did not desire it sufficiently, or, at least, did not sufficiently define the means necessary to obtain it. A good government ought not only to *respect* liberty, as Turgot says, but to *insure* it. Society should insure the free development of the faculties of each of its members by public instruction,[2] by protection accorded to the weak, to *minors* in age or condition, and by restrictions prescribing morality, hygiene, and justice in manufactures; the only legitimate ones on this subject. It should repair, as far as possible, by institutions, the effects of the inevitable factitious inequality due to hereditary transmission,—an inequality so often in an inverse ratio to that of natural capabilities. If it is untrue that mechanics *ought* not to earn any more than their subsistence, it is true, that, in point of fact, the majority do not earn any more than this, *even if they earn as much*, and that, in general, they earn much less than they *produce*. Society owes them all.

[1] To what Turgot calls "the puerile and sanguinary delusion of exclusive trade."—*Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 802.

[2] The physiocrats by no means denied this truth. All the eighteenth century, without distinction of school, demanded public instruction from the State. We should guard against ascribing to the first economists the responsibility of the aberrations of certain of their successors.

Digitized by Google

the reparation and compensation compatible with the liberty and rights of others. Liberty, lastly, requires society to secure the field to honorable manufactures against fraudulent competition. Liberty requires the State to protect individual competition against monopoly; in other terms, the State should do or regulate all that cannot be done by free competition. It is for the State to prepare, level, and keep in order the ground on which these competitors are to run their race; it is for the State to moderate the too violent collision of free forces on this ground; it is for the State to insure the liberty of each by the authority of all.

When, after journeying in detail over the immense field of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, we ascend to its highest point to embrace with a glance the whole movement of minds, setting aside contradictions, individual caprices, and accessory ideas, we distinguish three principal currents of social ideas, which may be styled the two systems of democracy and liberalism. One of the two democratic schools desired to purify, restrain, simplify, and strengthen man: it rejected temporal and aristocratic royalty as unjust and demoralizing, and spiritual royalty as incompatible with reason and with man's personal responsibility towards God. The other school demanded the unrestrained growth of all the human inclinations, without making any distinction between the essential and the artificial, the simple and the composite passions; and rejected the old authorities only in common with all restraint whatsoever. The one considered the sovereignty of the people as proceeding from the true divine right; that is, the individual as subject to the people, the people to God, justice, morality, and universal charity. The other admitted of no other law above man than an inevitable and necessary progress, and ended in the absolute sovereignty of strength or numbers: it would see little more in the Revolution than the conquest of material enjoyment for the disinherited children of earth; while the first would seek therein, above all, the conquest of political equality and human dignity. The spiritualistic democracy would be too much inclined to restrict, with a view to equality and moral reformation, that individual growth which the second school would suffer to run riot with one hand, while stifling it with the other by the law of numbers. It was reserved for the third, the liberal school, to define liberty, no longer by fact, but by right; to deduce it from the moral responsibility laid down by the spiritualistic democracy, and to limit it only by the liberty of others. In the fatalistic sects would be found the great obstacle to the tri-

Digitized by Google

umph and definitive organization of the Revolution. The modern times would not be fulfilled until the fatalistic school, disguised under so many forms, by turns mystical and materialistic, yielded before the double principle of divine and human personality, and comprehended that he who seeks nothing but bread for the body does not even find this bread. They would not be fulfilled until liberalism and democracy were confounded in a broader doctrine, under one of those blasts of religious inspiration which regenerate the world.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

LOUIS XV. (Concluded.)

Choiseul's Ministry. Trial of Father La Valette. Official Reports concerning the Constitutions of the Jesuits. The Jesuits suppressed in France. Abolition of the Order by Pope Clement XIV. Contention between the Court and the Parliaments. Death of Madame de Pompadour. Invasion of the Economists in Politics. First Experiments of Commercial and Industrial Freedom. New Quarrels with the Parliaments. Trial of La Chalotais. Death of the Dauphin. Choiseul's Projects for the Revival of France. Inprovements in the Army and the Marine. Acquisition of Corsica. Paoli. Affairs of Poland. Catharine and Frederick II. *Confederation of Bar.* Massacres in the Ukraine. The Poles and J. J. Rousseau. Dumouriez in Poland. War between Russia and Turkey. Projects of Prussia and Austria for the Partition of Poland. Marriage of the New Dauphin to *Marie Antoinette.* Terrai, Comptroller-General. System of Bankruptcy. Fall of Choiseul. Reign of Madame du Barri. Triumvirate of Maupeou, Terrai, and D'Aiguillon. Destruction of the Parliaments. Russia accedes to the Plans of Frederick II. Partition of Poland. The Minister, D'Aiguillon, abandons Poland. England an Accomplice. *Pact of Famine.* The King a Monopolizer. Death of Louis XV.

1763–1774.

It remains for us to survey the last political vicissitudes of the ancient French régime, which was hastening with constantly accelerated speed to its final overthrow. The end of the reign of Louis XV. shows nought but ruins accumulating, and paving the way for the universal ruin: the props and buttresses were crumbling; and the body of the edifice would not be long in giving way.

The first of these ruins was that of the Company of Jesus, a prop, doubtless, not of the State, but, at least, of the Roman Church. The progress of the philosophic doctrines contributed only indirectly to this great event, which was not, as has been pretended, planned long in advance, but which proceeded from incidental, remote, and unforeseen causes.

It is unnecessary to revert here to the spirit of the institution and the part of its members, who have been seen in this history continually at work for the last two centuries: their political and religious action is sufficiently known; but we have not hitherto

Digitized by Google

had occasion to point out their commercial action, so extended and encroaching, and which was destined to become so fatal to them. The first monks had been clearers of the forest, and tillers of the soil, in behalf of civilization. The Jesuits became traders and monopolizers, not in behalf of industrial and commercial progress, which did not need them, but in behalf of their wealth and their corporative power. These defenders of the dogmas of the past, these pretended revivers of the Middle Ages, who bore so little resemblance to the Middle Ages, adapted themselves but too well to the material tendencies of the modern world. They traded little in France, where they were held in check by the vigilance of the magistracy, but much in the French colonies: they exercised truly detestable monopolies at Rome, where they caused all the suits commenced against them to be suspended by the authorities; and paid their debts whenever it suited them. At Goa, in Spanish America, and in Brazil, they ruined secular commerce, not only by a competition which arrogated to itself all rights and rejected all burdens, but by smuggling, which was easy to those who had no search to fear from custom-house officers. They were thus detrimental at once to governments and to private individuals; and a smothered irritation against them lurked in the depths of many hearts.

Not content with ruling Spanish and Portuguese America, they had extended their missions beyond the limits of European colonization; and what they had been unable to do in Canada, among the indomitable tribes of the *red-skins*, they had accomplished in Paraguay among feeble and docile races. They had converted, organized, and civilized, in their way, the savages of these countries; and had there a great Jesuit kingdom of fifty parishes, governed despotically by as many fathers of the mission, themselves under the jurisdiction of the provincial father, the true King of Paraguay, — a strange government, founded on a theocratic communism, which they seemed to have copied from the ancient empire of Peru under the Incas. By introducing Christianity among these tribes, attaching them to the soil, and increasing their population through agriculture, they had placed them in a condition incomparably better than the wretched and almost animal life which they had formerly led in the forests, or that which other Indians had found under the destructive tyranny of the Spanish conquerors. If morality had reason elsewhere to blame the commercial operations of the Company of Jesus, here, therefore, humanity had only to applaud its success, although it

Digitized by Google

is necessary to distrust certain exaggerations, and to beware of presenting as a model community an infant people destined by its education to an eternal childhood,—a community in which human personality was yet to be born, in which property had no existence, and in which the family scarcely existed; the paternal power being wholly in the hands of the monk-kings, together with the soil, and the traffic in its productions.[1]

Paraguay, meanwhile, belonged nominally to the crown of Spain. In 1750, a bargain was made between Spain and Portugal for an exchange of territory. Spain ceded Paraguay for the colony of Sacramento (on the eastern bank of the La Plata), but ceded the land without the men, and stipulated that the inhabitants should be transferred to Spanish territory. The Indians, encouraged by the Jesuits, refused to permit themselves to be carried away from their country like herds of cattle; fought a battle with the Spanish troops; then, pursued and barbarously hunted down, dispersed among the forests and the pampas (1753–1756). The exchange, however, in consequence of new complications, was not realized; but both governments continued to bear ill will to the Jesuits, although the society had afterwards repudiated a resistance certainly very legitimate.

The cabinets of Madrid and Lisbon had, as we have just shown, better-founded grievances. The storm first broke out in Portugal. This was the country of all Europe in which the Jesuits exercised the most absolute dominion; and their introduction into this kingdom, so brilliant in the sixteenth century, and since so fallen, had corresponded with the beginning of its decline. They had stifled the bold and active genius of the country of Gama and Albuquerque: such, at least, was the conviction, which, long matured in the depths of a powerful and gloomy mind, directed the blow which crushed them. The minister who ruled Portugal under the name of the weak Joseph I., the Marquis de Pombal, did not belong to that Voltarian school which had made its way

[1] A bull of Benedict XIV., of December 25, 1741, proves that the Jesuits, paternal as they were in Paraguay, were not, however, everywhere irreproachable in their conduct towards the Indians. This bull forbids their "reducing the said Indians to servitude, selling them, buying them, exchanging them, . . . separating them from their wives and children, despoiling them of their goods and effects," etc. — See the Decree of the Parliament of Paris against the Jesuits, August, 1761; ap. *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 357. They had attempted the slave-trade. "In Africa, they had endeavored to establish trading-stations for the purpose of furnishing slaves for the pearl-fishery, which they carried on in India."—Desalles, *Histoire des Antilles*, t. V. p. 435. This writer gives very interesting details concerning the proceedings of the Jesuits in the West Indies.

Digitized by Google

at this epoch into the councils of most of the governments: a reformer also, but a reformer in a purely national sense, he was so little of a philosopher, that he took the Inquisition as a counterpoise to the Jesuits, and more than once made use of *autos-da fé* as means of popularity.[1] A double hatred filled his soul. The grandees fettered his policy and wounded his pride as a plebeian by their arrogance: he hated them as Richelieu had hated them, and he hated the Jesuits as Philippe the Fair had hated the Templars. His indignation against the society broke forth, at the beginning of 1758, in manifestoes, in which he denounced the Jesuits to the Pope, and accused them of having derogated from the principles of their founders by illicit traffic, and by plots against the State. He interdicted to them commerce, then preaching and confession; meanwhile employing against them the bishops and the Dominicans, who composed the tribunal of the Inquisition. They had oppressed every one, and every one became hostile to them. Pope Benedict XIV. died before giving a definitive answer to the Portuguese government (May, 1758).

During the interval, a domestic tragedy, which involved the appalling ruin of the first two families of Portugal, precipitated the destruction of the Jesuits in this kingdom by its reaction, and rendered the circumstances thereof more painful. King Joseph I. carried dishonor into the most illustrious houses by that frenzied licentiousness which he had inherited from his father, but which the latter had at least confined within the walls of a convent transformed into a harem. During the night of September 3, 1758, the King, while on his way secretly to visit the Marchioness de Tavora, a new victim of his seduction, received two bullets in his arm. Three months passed by, and the inquiries concerning this attempted regicide were deemed fruitless and abandoned; when suddenly all the Tavoras were arrested, together with the D'Aveiros, who had shared the outrages of the King with the Tavoras, and who had sought to share their vengeance. January 13, 1759, seven members or relatives of these two houses, including the mother-in-law of the King's mistress, condemned by an extraordinary commission of which Pombal was a member, perished amid frightful tortures. Surveillance, meanwhile, was maintained over the houses of all the Jesuits, three of whom had been

[1] The form of procedure of the Portuguese Inquisition had been modified in 1728 by the introduction of counsel and the communication of the heads of the indictment and the names of the witnesses to the accused, and was modified still farther by Pombal in 1758; but the penalty had not changed.

Digitized by Google

declared guilty, by the judges of the D'Aveiros and the Tavoras, of having authorized, as confessors or casuists, the project of the regicide. A brief was solicited of the new Pope, Clement XIII. (Rezzonico), authorizing their degradation and punishment. Clement XIII. delayed the sending of the brief; upon which the minister caused all the Portuguese Jesuits, numbering more than six hundred, to be seized, transported to the Roman States, and landed on the shore of Civita-Vecchia (September, 1759). The Pope, enraged, ordered Pombal's manifesto to be publicly burnt. The minister replied by confiscating the property of the society, and breaking off all diplomatic relations with Rome. It is very characteristic, that, after such acts of violence, Pombal, nevertheless, dared not set at nought the ecclesiastical privileges. Instead of condemning the principal one of the Jesuits inculpated, Malagrida, as guilty of high treason, he caused him to be declared a heretic by the Inquisition, and delivered over as such to the secular arm. Malagrida mounted the pyre of an auto-da-fé! (September 10, 1761.) His two companions in misfortune were left to die in prison.

The extraordinary acts of Pombal did not obtain that approbation abroad which seemed promised by the prevailing antipathy of public opinion to the Jesuits. In this period of the eighteenth century, the spirit of justice and humanity was more powerful than any party-spirit. The utility of the end did not appear to justify the barbarity and hypocrisy of the means. The philosophers saw in it only a civil war between despotism and the Inquisition on the one hand, and the Jesuits on the other. Voltaire openly declared, that, in the trial of Malagrida, "the excess of absurdity was joined to the excess of horror." The most curious feature was, that the English, those savage enemies of Papistry, manifested a lively discontent at the expulsion of the great Papist society, with which they carried on a lucrative contraband trade. Perhaps their policy also believed itself interested in the maintenance of a body which might indeed be a power to the Pope, but which caused the weakening of Catholic nations.

The example set by Pombal, nevertheless, had the same results as if the policy of this minister had been approved. Men disliked Pombal; but they none the less perceived with joy that it was easier to overthrow the Jesuits than they had imagined. So small and so superstitious a State having ventured on it, why should not France do the same? What none had thought the day before, every one thought now. The attack came from two directions at once,—the favorite and the parliament. Jansenism and the

Digitized by Google

court corruption contracted a strange offensive alliance. We have already related how Madame de Pompadour, when she effected the adroit evolution which transformed her from the mistress into the friend and counsellor of the King, attempted to set herself right with the Church and to make friends with the Jesuits; and how the latter, who had united with the party of the Dauphin, rejected the advances of the favorite, who was forced to accept war (1752–1757). It was therefore through austerity that the society, so much blamed for its accommodating maxims, had this time endangered its existence.[1]

An honorable deed had involved the Jesuits in peril; a dishonorable one plunged them into it still deeper. Father La Valette, the superior-general of the Jesuits in the Windward Islands, had converted the house of his order, at St. Pierre in Martinique, into an extensive banking and trading establishment, in correspondence with the most important places of Europe; and monopolized all the commercial business of the French Lesser Antilles. The government, at the solicitation of the colonists, prohibited him, as well as his fellows, from occupying himself with any thing but the ecclesiastical ministry. Supported by his superiors, he paid no attention to the prohibition. In 1755, Father La Valette having drawn numerous letters of exchange upon his principal correspondents, Lionci and Gouffre, the heads of a commercial house of Marseilles, the merchandise which he sent to France to cover these letters was piratically seized by the English.[2] Lionci and Gouffre had recourse, for their reimbursement, to Father de Saci, the attorney-general of the missions of France, who at first furnished them some funds, but who did not think himself authorized to take the steps necessary to meet all their demands without referring to his superiors. The generalship of the company was then vacant; an inevitable delay in filling it occurred: the paper, meanwhile, was protested, and the Lioncis suspended payment (February, 1756). The new general, Ricci, who had at first determined

[1] Later, however, the leaders of the society at Paris endeavored to retrace their steps, and made secret advances to Madame de Pompadour; but it was too late. — *Mém. de madame du Hausset*, Barrière edit. p. 103.

[2] Another resource also failed La Valette: he had announced his intention of sending to France the relics of holy personages of his order who had formerly suffered martyrdom at the hands of the savages. The pretended relics were ingots of gold. The cases arrived at the Jesuit convent at Bordeaux, where they were found to contain, instead of ingots and relics, nothing but the bones of animals. They had been opened by the captain of the ship. The Jesuits could not enter a complaint, the bill of lading having specified nothing but bones. — Desalles, *Hist. des Antilles*, t. V. p. 432. This book gives the best account extant of the affair of La Valette.

Digitized by Google

to pay the claims and continue the commerce, seeing that it was too late to arrest the scandal, and that analogous demands were about to appear from different places, changed his mind, and ordered the redemption to cease, and La Valette to be repudiated. The assignee of the bankrupt Lionci having brought an action before the consul-judges of Marseilles against Fathers La Valette and De Saci, La Valette suffered default. De Saci refused to be responsible for the operations of his subordinate. La Valette was sentenced besides to pay one million five hundred thousand francs to the assignees of Lionci: the decision with respect to Saci was postponed (November, 1759).

Both judges and creditors were agreed in allowing the Jesuits full time for reflection; but the general, Ricci, was used to the customs of Rome, where the Jesuits were above the laws, and where public opinion had no force. He kept silence. La Valette became bankrupt for more than three millions. The Lioncis, having no further reason for conciliation, brought an action against the whole body of Jesuits in France, as jointly responsible. The consuls decided in conformity with the demands of the plaintiffs (May 29, 1760).

The reaction of this affair was speedily felt at a distance. The counting-house of the Jesuits at Genoa was closed by the Genoese government, and Venice forbade the Venetian Jesuits thenceforth to receive novices. In France, the lieutenant-general of police, Ségur, interdicted to them the sale of drugs; and the immense pharmacy which they had at Lyons was closed.

They had suffered default, and taken exception to the sentence of the consuls. A last chance remained to them. The trial of the regular clergy was assigned as a privilege to the Great Council; an exceptional tribunal, which was friendly to the Church, and which would have doubtless endeavored to enlighten them concerning their true interests, and to induce them to settle the matter amicably. A Father Frey, a Jesuit of Paris, who passed for an acute politician, persuaded them not to use this privilege, but to carry the case to the Great Chamber of the Parliament of Paris. Their triumph, certain in any case according to him, would be only more brilliant before such a tribunal. The spirit of madness had seized upon this body, so renowned for its worldly prudence. It put into the hands of its greatest enemies a cause which the best disposed judges could have decided in its favor only by being false to all justice!

The leaders of the society at Paris doubtless relied at this mo-

Digitized by Google

ment on the success of a cabal formed at court to overthrow Choiseul, and to give the power to the coterie of the Dauphin. This prince, whose private virtues seemed a reaction and protest against his father's vices, personally deserved all esteem;[1] but though he was far from being deficient in instruction, and even in mind, his surroundings were not good, and his narrow devotion and prejudices led him to serve by petty means a plot unworthy of his character. The Duke de La Vauguyon, the governor of the children of France, a malignant and intriguing fanatic, whose crafty ambition Choiseul had offended, persuaded the Dauphin to convey to the King a memorial written by a Jesuit under the name of a parliamentary counsellor. This was a denunciation of Choiseul, who was accused of having conspired with the parliaments to force the King to destroy the Society of Jesus, the whole spiced with the details best calculated to pique the self-love of Louis XV. The intrigue failed. The minister came off victorious from an explanation with the King, — an explanation followed by an extremely warm scene with the Dauphin. It was on this occasion that Choiseul let fall the speech that was destined to close the way to his return to power after the death of Louis XV.: "Monsieur, I may have the misfortune to be your subject; but I will never be your servant"[2] (June, 1760).

The most piquant feature in this affair was, that Choiseul, although attached to the interests of Madame de Pompadour, had troubled himself very little about the Jesuits, and that he took in great part from their own memorial the idea of the plan which he afterwards pursued against them, without, however, by any means employing in it the implacableness of which they had accused him; for he was not at all vindictive. The magistracy used far greater ardor.

The suit of Marseilles, meanwhile, had reached the parliament of Paris. The general had this time been indicted in person by the assignee of the bankrupt Lionci. The Jesuits denied the joint responsibility imputed to them by their adversaries, and maintained that each of their houses or colleges was administered separately with respect to temporal matters. It was for their constitutions

[1] Having had the misfortune to wound one of his squires mortally while hunting, he abandoned this exercise, his favorite amusement, to the detriment of his health, and never again touched a fire-arm.

[2] *Mém. de Choiseul*, t. I. pp. 1–56. These are not connected memoirs, but a collection of various documents written by Choiseul, some of which are very interesting. — *Mém. de Besenval*, t. II.

Digitized by Google

to decide the point of fact. The parliament ordered the constitutions to be brought to its bar (April 17, 1761). May 8, with full knowledge of the case, it confirmed the sentence of the consul-judges according to the conclusions of the attorney-general, Le Pelletier de Saint-Fargeau.[1]

This was only the first blow. The constitutions of the society once drawn by force from the obscurity of its archives, the parliament of Paris did not relax its hold on them; and almost all the provincial parliaments, after its example, appointed commissions thoroughly to examine every thing concerning Ignatius's institution. The general, Ricci, at last comprehended the state of affairs. At the news of the prescribed examination, he wrote to Choiseul a most curious letter (May 13, 1761), in which he let fall the confession that several points of the constitutions of the society, as they were drawn up by its founder, were incompatible with the political principles of *certain States;* but represented, that, inasmuch as the society abandoned the points in question wherever the sovereigns exacted it, the theory of its laws should not be condemned without examining the policy by which they were explained or modified.[2] Pope Clement XIII. addressed to the King the most earnest entreaties for the safety of the society (June 9, 1761). Louis replied favorably to the Holy Father, and promised to check the ardor of his parliament, and to reserve to himself the right of deciding on the constitutions of the Jesuits. Choiseul himself had not yet resolved on his course, and had told the King, on learning of the decree of the parliament concerning the examination of the constitutions, that he could still choose between the destruction or the maintenance of the Jesuits; but that, if he did not wish to destroy them, he should stop the parliament at the first step. The King was disposed to do so; but the Chancellor de Lamoignon entreated him to temporize.[3] Louis caused the constitutions to be transmitted to him, and appointed commissioners from his council to report to him thereon; but he did not forbid the parliament, on its side, to continue its investigation.

The parliament of Paris proceeded. July 8, a clerical counsellor, the Abbé Terrai, a personage for whom a deplorable celebrity was in store, presented to the *assembled chambers* a report "on

[1] The father of the one, who, after playing a somewhat important part in the National Convention, was sacrificed by a royalist dagger to the manes of Louis XVI.

[2] Flassan, *Histoire de la Diplomatie française*, t. VI. p. 489.

[3] *Mém. de Besenval*, t. II. p. 56, according to the testimony of Choiseul.

Digitized by Google

the moral and practical doctrine of the so-called priests and scholars of the Society of Jesus." A new commission was deputed by the parliament to substantiate the startling assertions of the report. The King attempted to gain time. August 4, he sent to the parliament a declaration suspending for a year all decision upon whatever concerned the society. The parliament registered it, but, nevertheless, published two scathing decrees which it had prepared (August 6). The first condemned to the flames a great number of books composed by the Jesuits during the last two centuries, as teaching a *murderous* and *abominable* doctrine against the safety of the lives of citizens, and even of sovereigns; temporarily prohibited all subjects of the King from entering the society, or becoming affiliated thereto; interdicted all functions of instruction to the priests, scholars, etc., of the said society, from the first of the ensuing April, with the reservation of the right of those, who might claim to be authorized by letters-patent verified by the parliament, to present these letters;[1] declared all students who continued to attend the Jesuit schools after the expiration of the time fixed, in whatever place it might be, ineligible to any degrees or public functions; and requested of the universities, and the judicial and municipal authorities, memorials on the means of providing for the education of the youth instructed by the Jesuits. The second decree received the appeal from the ecclesiastical court, as having exceeded its jurisdiction, lodged by the attorney-general against all the bulls and briefs of the popes that had founded or confirmed the society, and against "the said constitutions," especially with respect to the despotic power attributed to the general, — a power independent of all temporal or even spiritual authority, since the papacy was bound to the society to such a degree, that, if the Holy See should interfere by any act of revocation or reformation, the society was empowered to restore every thing to its former condition, on its own authority, and without the authorization of the Holy See!

August 29, letters-patent of the King suspended for a year the execution of the decrees of August 6. The parliament registered them, with the provision that the suspension should not take place till April 1, and that no vows or affiliations should be received in the interval; in other words, it very nearly maintained its decrees.

A first endeavor to compromise was attempted meanwhile by the

[1] More than half the Jesuit colleges (eighty out of one hundred and forty-eight) had been established without legal authority.

Digitized by Google

court of France. The King sent to the Holy Father the plan of a declaration to be signed by the superiors of the houses of the society, and which contained, among other articles, an assent to the Gallican liberties. The only concession which could be obtained from the Pope and the General was to close their eyes to the assent that might be given by the French Jesuits, but without permitting them to do so in writing, in order to reserve the right, in better times, of annulling the declaration as *surreptitious*.[1]

The expedient was farcical. The King was still unwilling to break off the negotiation. The commissioners of the council consulted the archbishops and bishops present at Paris concerning the utility that could be derived from the Jesuits, and the means of remedying the despotism of their leader. The spirit of the higher clergy had greatly changed through the long Molinistic dominion: of fifty-one prelates, a single one declared himself in favor of the abolition of the Jesuits; five, in favor of maintaining them only as colleges, and not as an institution; and all the rest entreated the King to preserve them, "as religion itself," but admitted the necessity of grave modifications in their institution. It was decided to propose to the general to delegate his full powers for France to five provincial vicars, who were to take an oath before the chancellor of obedience to the laws of the kingdom, to engage to cause the Four Articles of 1682 to be taught, to admit no foreign Jesuit into France without the King's permission, and to submit to the inspection of their colleges by the parliament (January, 1762). An edict drawn up on these bases, March 11, 1762, was sent to the parliament of Paris, as if it were certain that this ultimatum would be accepted at Rome.[2]

The answer ascribed to General Ricci is well known, *Sint ut sunt, aut non sint!* (Let them be as they are, or not at all![3]) The saying has been disputed: the refusal is certain. Acceptance was impossible. For a cosmopolitan theocracy to shut itself up in a State and a national Church, and to submit to the yoke of civil laws, was suicide. It was better to die fighting than to die repudiating itself. The Pope sought to arouse the fanaticism that still existed in France. Not daring to have recourse to

[1] Flassan, t. VI. p. 494

[2] Flassan, t. VI. p. 498; *Mercure historique*, t. CLI. p. 640, t. CLII. p. 382.

[3] This saying is accepted as authentic by the diplomatic historians, Flassan and Saint-Priest: the *Mercury* of the Hague ascribes it, not to Ricci, but to Clement XIII. himself.

Digitized by Google

the obsolete thunders of the Middle Ages, he strove at least to stir up the ecclesiastical order in behalf of the Jesuits, and to put himself in direct communication, contrary to the laws of the kingdom, with the periodical assembly of the clergy, in session at Paris in the spring of 1762. The Cardinal de La Roche-Aimon, the president of the assembly, refused to receive the papal brief, and transmitted it to the King, who ordered it to be sent back to the Holy Father.

Louis XV. had decided, or rather resigned himself, with his usual indifference.[1] Choiseul, his course once resolved upon, had seconded Madame de Pompadour with his accustomed vivacity. The struggle had been warm at court. The Queen, the Dauphin, and their friends, had made desperate efforts to save the society. Old habits of bigoted friendliness to the Jesuits contended strangely in the King with the fear of the *knife of Châtel*, revived by the *regicide* of Portugal. Choiseul won him by another fear,—that of the parliaments and the people, whom he represented to him as so much excited against the society, as to be on the point of inciting a new Fronde if the Jesuits were maintained. In fact, it was too late to draw back. No statesman could have advised him to do so. The true policy, and the only one worthy of him, would have been to strike the blow from the throne, and to anticipate the decrees of the parliaments by a royal declaration. Louis XV. preferred leaving all the responsibility and honor to the courts of justice.

The whole winter of 1761–1762 had been occupied with those celebrated reports to the different parliaments, in which the magistracy's long-standing resentment against the great congregation was poured forth with an ardent, inexhaustible, and, at times, eloquent passion. The parliamentary names of Chauvelin (the son of the minister), Terrai, Laverdi, Castillon, and, above all, Montclar and La Chalotais, equalled for an instant in popularity the great philosophic names of the age. A generation that did not believe in Christianity sided with the official accusers of the society in the old controversies which denied that the Jesuits were orthodox Christians. To one of these men, at least, popularity remained glory: the character of La Chalotais worthily sustained the renown procured for him by his scathing polemic against the society, and his remarkable *Essay on Na-*

[1] He gave his assent by a jest: "I should not be sorry to see how Father Desmaretz would look as an abbé (in bands instead of a long robe)." Desmaretz was the King's confessor. — *Mém. de Besenval*, t. II. p. 58.

Digitized by Google

tional Education. It was as a patriot and a statesman that he had condemned the Jesuits.[1]

The parliament of Rouen had not waited for the King's permission to strike. As early as February 15, it had annulled, and condemned to the flames, the statutes of the society, and ordered all the Jesuits to vacate their houses and colleges situated within its jurisdiction; then had imposed on them, as a condition of their individual eligibility to any functions whatsoever, an oath of assent to the Articles of 1682, and of rupture with the society and the general. All the colleges within the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris were vacated April 1, in conformity with the decrees of August 6, 1761, and given up to new professors, Oratorians and others. Decrees analogous to those of Rouen followed each other at Bordeaux, Rennes, Metz, Pau, Perpignan, Toulouse, and Aix. August 6, the parliament of Paris defaulted the general of the *so-called Society of Jesus* in the appeal from the ecclesiastical court, as having exceeded its jurisdiction, received a year before; and declared "the said institution inadmissible, by its nature, in any established State, as contrary to natural law, and tending to introduce, into the Church and the States, not an order which aspires truly and solely to evangelical perfection, but rather a political body, whose essence consists in a continual activity, for the purpose of attaining, by every kind of means, first to absolute independence, and successively to the usurpation of all authority; especially inasmuch as, in order to form an immense body diffused throughout all States without really forming a part of them, . . . the said society has constituted itself monarchical: . . . so that as many members as it procures among the different nations, so many subjects, who take an oath of the most absolute and unbounded fidelity to a foreign monarch, are lost by the sovereigns, . . . a body, which, by its very existence amidst any State into which it is introduced, evidently tends to effect the dissolution of all administration, and to destroy the close relation which forms the bond between all the parts of the body politic."[2]

[1] "I design to claim for the nation an education which depends only on the State, because a nation has an inalienable and imprescriptible right to instruct its members, and because, in fine, the children of the State should be reared by the State." — *Rapport du procureur-général Caradeuc de La Chalotais au parlement de Bretagne.* It is important to remark that the question is put here, not between monopoly and liberty, according to the formula which is so much abused in our days, but between the country and foreign theocracy. The report of Montclar, says M. Villemain, is a masterpiece of method and perspicuity.

[2] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 328.

Digitized by Google

The parliament might have dispensed with prefacing these serious and solid conclusions by premises which were refuted by their own exaggeration, — an enormous mass of quotations combined for the purpose of imputing to the Society of the Jesuits the systematic justification of every vice and crime. Whatever may be said concerning the morality of the Jesuits,[1] their true crime was that of being a State within a State, a foreign body whose parasitical presence is, as the parliament well said, a principle of *dissolution*, a morbid principle in the national body.

The parliament concluded by declaring that the vows of the Jesuits were null and void, and that the society had forfeited its first authorization and its reëstablishment (under Henri IV., to the conditions of which, moreover, it had never conformed), and was irrevocably excluded from the kingdom. It forbade all persons ever to propose or solicit the recall of the society, under penalty of criminal prosecution. It enjoined on all members of the society to vacate their houses within a week, without power to assemble anew; and imposed on those among them who aspired to any functions whatever the same oath that had been dictated by the parliament of Rouen.

The decree was promulgated in the name of the King. Another decree of the same date, confirmed and modified a few months after by a regulation of the council, provided for the administration of the colleges, for pensions for the support of the ex-Jesuits, and for the payment of the creditors, who, it may be said in passing, were never fully satisfied.

The effect on public opinion was immense: men thought themselves dreaming on seeing this clay-footed colossus fall so easily! The few remaining Jansenists, and the old bourgeoisie in general, partly Gallican and partly Voltarian, applauded with delight. The philosophers and the politicians saw in the downfall of the Jesuits a first blow dealt to the edifice of the past, and the presage of the speedy ruin of all the monks; of all, at least, who led an active life, and were under the jurisdiction of foreign leaders.[2]

[1] See Martin's *Histoire de France*, t. VIII. pp. 313–320, and t. XI. pp. 73–78.

[2] See D'Alembert's work, *De la Destruction des Jésuites*, 1765 (published anonymously), and the *Correspondance de Voltaire*, passim. "The monastic spirit," said Chalotais to the parliament of Brittany, "is the scourge of States. Of all who are animated by this spirit, the Jesuits are the most injurious, because they are the most powerful: it is therefore with them that we must begin in order to shake off the yoke of this pernicious class."

After the suppression of the Jesuits, the government turned its attention to remedying some of the abuses of monasticism. An edict of March, 1768, forbade the entrance

Digitized by Google

The joy, however, was not unanimous: there was opposition, bitter complaint, and smothered agitation, among the numerous affiliated members or penitents of the Jesuits, and among minds who were dismayed at the progress of infidelity, and who regarded the Jesuits as the *grenadiers of the army of faith*. Pamphlets rained everywhere. It was known that the Pope had annulled the decree of the parliaments in secret consistory; but he dared not give publicity to his allocution. A few bishops issued hostile mandates; and, which was more serious, a few parliaments hesitated to follow their colleagues, and had not yet caused the colleges within their jurisdiction to be vacated: the parliaments of Metz, Grenoble, and Dijon, stood on the reserve; that of Aix had adopted the suppression by a majority of one; and the parliaments of Besançon and Douai were wholly in favor of the society. Some decrees of the council concerning questions of execution were stamped with a dilatoriness which disquieted the parliament of Paris and its allies of the provinces. The parliament of Paris, seconded by the ministry, spared nothing to urge the King to an irrevocable act. The parliament ordered a virulent pastoral letter of instructions from the Archbishop of Paris, who had compared the Society of Jesus to the *Holy City of Jerusalem*,[1] to be burned. The King banished the archbishop forty leagues from Paris (January, 1764). February 22, the parliament prescribed that all Jesuits, without distinction, should take an oath, within a week, no longer to live under the dominion of their institution, to abjure the condemned maxims, and to hold no correspondence with their former leaders. A few only obeyed. June 1, the parliament set aside two briefs of the Pope.

The parliament prevailed. The death of Madame de Pompadour (March 15, 1764) did not shake Choiseul's power, and was of no advantage to the Jesuits. A royal declaration of November, 1764, wholly abolished the society in France, permitting its former mem-

into the monastic profession of men under twenty-one, and women under eighteen. This was called a remedy: it may be judged what was the evil! The same edict tended to lessen the number of convents by uniting them: the most had but a small number of monks. Part of the monks themselves went beyond the secular authority. There was a kind of schism among the Benedictines: many of them demanded from the civil power the abolition of what was most contrary to the spirit of the age in their order; but the latter recoiled from the task.

[1] Among the numerous apologies of the Jesuits, condemned to the flames by the parliament, is remarked a certain *Appel à la Raison*, by Caveirac, the apologist of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Another more celebrated *Apology* was that of the young Jesuit Cerutti, a man of an ardent and impassioned spirit, who became a revolutionist in 1789.

Digitized by Google

bers to live as private individuals in the kingdom, under the spiritual authority of the regular clergy, and in conformity with the laws. The parliament aggravated their position by a decree which ordered them to reside in their native dioceses, and to present themselves every six months before the deputy attorney-generals in the bailiwicks and seneschalships, and forbade them to approach within ten leagues of Paris.[1]

After Portugal, France had attacked the society; after France, it was the turn of Spain. Here the purely national motives which had impelled the Portuguese government were combined with the philosophic inspiration of the spirit of the age. The King, however, was personally an utter stranger to this inspiration. Carlos III., the only estimable and in any degree sensible monarch that the Bourbons had given to Spain, while replacing on the throne the sluggish hypochondria of his predecessors by a salutary activity, supported by a feeling of duty, had retained of his family traditions a rigorous and minute devotion; but his devotion was not servile towards Rome, and his ministers had philosophy in his stead. The D'Arandas, the Campomanes, the Rodas, and the Moniños (afterwards better known under the name of Florida-Blanca) were more or less completely absorbed in the movement of French ideas. They did not need to suggest to the King prejudices against the Jesuits which had existed in his mind from the time that he reigned at Naples. The remembrance of the Paraguay affair, prior to his accession to the throne of Spain, had been revived by the complaints of the viceroys of Spanish America concerning the commercial monopolies of the Jesuits. Carlos III., however, hesitated long before resolving upon a violent course. He began to be irritated, when, in 1765, he thought that he discerned the hand of the Jesuits, at the same time with that of the English, in the serious disturbances which broke out among the Hispano-American population on account of a new system of taxation. Spain soon experienced the reaction of these movements. One of the ministers of Carlos III., the Italian Squillace, had rendered himself unpopular at once as a foreigner, an innovator, and a despot, among a proud nation, ruled by the spirit of routine, and little disposed to accept progress through despotism. Squillace having taken a fancy to prohibit the broad slouched hats and large cloaks (*chambergos* and *capas*), those two essential articles of the national costume, Madrid rose infuriatedly. The King's guard was routed, the King was obliged to make terms with the mob,

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 424.

Digitized by Google

and the minister was forced to quit Spain (March 23–27, 1766).

The Spanish character might, rigorously, have sufficed naturally to explain the sedition: nevertheless, Carlos III., deeply incensed, attributed his affront to the Society of Jesus. The King of Spain was not deluded, as has been imagined, by the secret manœuvres of Choiseul: it was the result of a serious investigation, pursued secretly by the command of Carlos, that persuaded this prince of the culpability of the Jesuits. Their plan, as Carlos affirmed to the ambassador from France, was to cause the rioters to impose on him far different conditions from the dismissal of a minister, and to put him in tutelage in the hands of a party that wished to deprive Spain of the advantage of the trifling progress which she had begun to make.[1] The Jesuits aimed at indemnifying themselves in Spain for their disasters in France and Portugal.[2]

It is certain that Carlos III., far from being the instrument of the cabinet of Versailles, did not apprise Louis XV. and Choiseul of his intentions until the very moment when he was about to act, after a year of mysterious preparation. April 2, 1767, a royal Pragmatic Sanction not only abolished the Society of Jesus, but expelled the Jesuits from the entire monarchy of Spain, accompanied with a prohibition to all Spaniards to discuss the measure adopted by the King, even to approve it, under penalty of high treason; "because it does not belong to private individuals," said the Pragmatic Sanction, "to judge and interpret the wishes of the sovereign." The violence of the execution responded to this strange language. On the same day, at the same hour, throughout the whole extent of the Spanish possessions, from one end of the world to the other, the Jesuits were arrested and embarked on ships or transported towards the seaports.[3] The vessels that bore them set sail for the Roman State. Carlos III. sent

[1] Two concordats, issued in 1737 and 1753, had, in some degree, attacked the ultramontane supremacy; and a decree of 1762, which was abrogated, then reëstablished, had greatly modified and mitigated the Inquisition. — See W. Coxe, *L'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. V. p. 168, and in Saint-Priest, *De la Suppression de la Société de Jésus*, the analysis of the despatches from the French ambassador to M. de Choiseul.

[2] *Les Jésuites jugés par les rois, les évêques, et le pape*, published by L. Viardot, pp. 18–25; 1857, in 12mo. This is the translation of whatever concerns the Jesuits in the Spanish History of Carlos III., by Don Ant. Ferrer del Rio, a history written from the Correspondence of Carlos III., and other documents from the archives of Simancas. The Spanish author, a fervent Catholic, moreover, deduces from the facts the culpability of the Jesuits.

[3] No exceptions were made, except for those of very advanced age and the sick. — *Instruction du comte d'Aranda*, ibid. p. 34.

Digitized by Google

back the Jesuits to the Pope as being his subjects in reality, and not those of the crown of Spain.

At the instigation of the general himself, Ricci, who reigned at Rome under the name of the aged Clement XIII., the court of Rome replied to the notification of Carlos III. that it would not receive the exiles, although Carlos promised to insure their support. Spain paid no attention to it. When the first Spanish ships, laden with Jesuits, arrived at Civita-Vecchia, they were received with a cannonade. Anger and despair had driven Ricci to madness! The Spaniards, unwilling to employ force against the Pope, put out again to sea, and presented themselves successively before Leghorn, Genoa, and the Corsican ports, occupied by the French: they were refused a landing everywhere, until finally Choiseul, by the entreaty of Carlos III., consented to grant an asylum in Corsica to the Spanish exiles. These unhappy victims of the barbarous obstinacy of their own leader, even more than of Spanish harshness, crowded in the transports, had been tossed about for several months in the Mediterranean; and it is affirmed that many among them had succumbed to the fatigues and sufferings of this mournful voyage. The court of Rome at last relaxed its cruel resolution, and received at least those of the Jesuits who were brought from the East and America.

Their brethren of France had just received a new blow. They had been very insubordinate to the commands of the parliaments, and had endeavored to take advantage of the renewed strife between the parliaments and the court to raise up embarrassments and perils in the way of their conquerors. At the news of the Spanish Pragmatic Sanction, the parliament of Paris declared the Jesuits public enemies, enjoined on them all to quit the kingdom within a fortnight, and entreated the King to concert with the Catholic princes to obtain from the Pope the total extinction of the society (May 9, 1767).[1] All the measures aimed at the existence of the society were sanctioned by public opinion; but the acts of personal violence exceeded the popular sentiment. If the Jansenists were implacable towards their hereditary persecutors, the philosophers, more humane, more Christian, so to speak, in feeling, than the orthodox Christians, did not refuse their pity, and even perhaps, at times, their aid, to so many outlaws, the greater part of whom had been only the passive instruments of the policy of their order. The philosophers began, moreover, to fear that the harsh genius of Jansenism, revived by the fall of the rival fac-

[1] *Mercure historique*, t. CLXII. p. 635.

Digitized by Google

tion, might become more dangerous to liberty and tolerance than Jesuitism itself. Strange to say, it was, in great part, through humanity that Choiseul entered into the views of the parliaments in relation to the total abolition of the society. Far removed from the implacable hatred which the apologists of the Jesuits have imputed to him, he thought, on the contrary, that, the order once abolished by the Holy Father, the exiles would everywhere be suffered to return peaceably, and to live in private, each in his native country.

The King of Spain, so violent towards the Jesuits of his States, nevertheless hesitated when Choiseul on the one hand, and Pombal on the other, proposed to him to act in concert with them against the entire order. The Pope aided the enemies of the society by an imprudent provocation. The two Bourbon States of Italy, Naples and Parma, had followed the example of Spain, and expelled the Jesuits. Clement XIII. attacked the weaker, and declared the Duke of Parma excommunicated *de facto*, and shorn of his principality, by the Bull, *In cœnâ Domini*, as a rebellious vassal of the Church (January 20, 1768). Thenceforth it was Carlos III. that urged Louis XV. to act. The King of Spain was slow to decide, but immovable in his resolutions once taken. The seizure of Avignon and Comtat by the French, and the invasion of Benevento by the Neapolitans, avenged the affront to the House of Bourbon. Venice, Modena, and even Bavaria, that centre of German Jesuitism, expelled the Jesuits. Maria Theresa did not decide to do so: nevertheless, the chairs of theology and philosophy were taken from the Jesuits in the Austrian States. January 16, 20, and 24, 1769, the ambassadors from Spain, Naples, then France, presented to the Pope a request for the suppression of the Society of Jesus. The aged pontiff, wounded to the heart, died on the very night preceding the consistory in which the question was to be discussed (February 3, 1769).

The Jesuits made desperate efforts to carry the election of a zealous Pope: they knocked at every door, and implored the protection of the new Emperor, Joseph II., who made a journey to Rome, *incognito*, during the conclave. Joseph showed nothing but indifference and disdain, not only for the society, but for the Sacred College. The Jesuit party lost the election by two votes. The cordelier Ganganelli, of doubtful opinion, was elected by a kind of compromise (May 19, 1769). Very different from his predecessor, the rigid, mediocre, and obstinate Clement XIII., the new Pope, Clement XIV., was intellectual, scholarly, and tolerant,

Digitized by Google

another Benedict XIV., with less vivacity of spirit and gentler manners: he had committed perhaps but a single fault in his life, — that of suffering himself to be infected with the contagious malady of the cardinals, the *mania for the tiara* (*the papal rabies*). His ambition cost him dear. Scarcely installed, the terrible affair of the Jesuits became a perpetual nightmare to him.[1] He thought only of gaining time, without coming to any decision; and soon found himself between the open threats of Carlos III., whose impatience urged on the indifferent Louis XV. and the smothered menaces of the Jesuits, who alarmed him for his life by sinister rumors. Poison became a fixed idea with him. Choiseul treated these alarms with his habitual levity:[2] Voltaire had made incredulity the fashion with respect to poison. The King of Spain offered the Pope soldiers for his defence, as if the kind of peril which Clement dreaded could be repulsed with bayonets. In order to obtain a new delay, the Holy Father wrote a letter to Carlos III., in which he explicitly pledged himself to abolish the society, and acknowledged that "its members had deserved their ruin by their restless spirit and their audacious intrigues" (April, 1770). This written promise placed him wholly at the discretion of the Bourbons. He made another concession by annulling the famous Bull, *In cœnâ Domini*, which excommunicated *de facto* all princes, magistrates, etc., who might touch the property of the Church or in any way attack its privileges.

The Jesuits struggled to the end with the energy of despair. Their general sought protection from the *heretical* or *schismatic* powers inimical to the House of Bourbon: he strove to interest Frederick II., the Czarina, and England herself, in the cause of the society. During the interval, Choiseul fell from the ministry, through causes which will be narrated hereafter (December, 1770). The society believed itself saved and avenged. The Jesuits presented a memorial to Louis XV., in which they solicited the arraignment of various diplomatic agents of Choiseul, hoping thus to reach the ex-minister himself. Their illusions were speedily dispelled. The court of Spain was much more eager than Choiseul for their destruction, and Louis XV. dared not endanger the *Family Compact* by refusing the continuance of

[1] He may have given hopes to both parties; but the Spanish historian of Carlos III., Don Ant. Ferrer, asserts that he had not pledged himself, as is affirmed, before his election, to suppress the Jesuits. — *Les Jésuites jugés*, etc.; pp. 60–63.

[2] "No one would be sure of dying in his bed if every intriguer was an assassin." — Despatch from Choiseul, cited by Saint-Priest; *Suppression de la Société de Jésus*.

Digitized by Google

his aid to Carlos III. The Jesuits strove next to redouble the terrors of Clement XIV. Predictions of death showered upon him on all sides: the general, Ricci, secretly effected an interview between him and a fortune-teller who prophesied the speedy vacancy of the Holy See. The leagued courts nevertheless prevailed. The last pretext for resistance failed: Maria Theresa, persuaded by the Emperor, her son, consented to the suppression of the society. The brief of abolition appeared July 20, 1773. The Holy Father reviewed therein the charges that were brought against the Jesuits, and, without absolutely admitting them, acknowledged that "the members of the company had not a little disturbed the Christian republic, and that, for the good of Christianity, it was better that the order should disappear." The remaining houses of the order were closed; the general, Ricci, was imprisoned in the château of Saint-Ange; and the court of Versailles once more restored to the Pope Avignon and Comtat Venaissin, which Choiseul had intended to retain, and which the Revolution was soon to annex definitively to France.

The forebodings of Clement XIV. were not immediately realized. For several months after this great act, his health remained good, and he recovered his spirits. One day (towards the end of the Holy Week of 1774), he was seized with an intestinal disturbance, followed by a heavy chill. Fatal symptoms succeeded, and never more left him; his whole physical system became disordered; his reason wandered; and the unhappy pontiff recovered self-consciousness only to die after prolonged tortures (September 22, 1774). The cry at Rome was, that he died of *aqua tofana*. The question remains uncertain. The Cardinal de Bernis, the French ambassador at Rome at the epoch of the catastrophe, after a secret inquiry into the circumstances of the illness and death of Clement XIV., drew up a statement which should be found in the archives of foreign afairs, *but which has disappeared*. The Cardinal de Bernis was convinced of the poisoning of Clement XIV.; and, according to his testimony, Pope Pius VI., Clement's successor, had no more doubts of it than himself.[1] But, on the other hand, the Spanish minister Moñino

[1] "The manner of the Pope's illness, and, above all, the circumstances of his death, cause it to be commonly believed that it was not natural. . . . The physicians who were present at the opening of the corpse express themselves cautiously, while the surgeons use less circumspection." — Despatch from Bernis, September 28. "Every one cognizant, like myself, of certain documents communicated to me by the late Pope, will consider the suppression (of the society) perfectly just and necessary. The circumstances which preceded, accompanied, and followed the death of the late Pope,

Digitized by Google

(Florida-Blanca) and the Neapolitan minister Tanucci did not believe in it, and thought that Clement had died through the fear of poison, and the too free use of antidotes, and not by poison. They accused the Jesuits of having really killed the Pope by a system of terror organized around him, and of *boasting* of a crime which they had not committed in order to cause themselves to be believed more formidable than they were.[1]

The rôle of the great association created in the sixteenth century for the purpose of opposing the free development of the mind and of human individuality had not ended: the victory of the eighteenth century was not final. The Jesuits were destined to reapppear, and to see Jansenism, and, almost entirely, Gallicanism itself, that tradition which had formerly saved France from sharing in the profound decline of the *kingdoms of obedience*, — the ultramontane Catholic nations, — effaced before them. It was not by their own strength that the Jesuits would revive and invade the Catholic Church, but through the weakness of others, the enervation of the public mind. Two causes were destined to produce their return: one was the tendency to concentration, the effort towards unity at any price in the Church, after the terrible blows of the Revolution; the other was the unsatisfying nature of the result produced in the moral and religious domain by the philosophy of the eighteenth century, the principles of which, whether fatalistic and materialistic, or purely critical, had obstructed the growth and fettered the development of the principles of regeneration and life. Thence arose, for a time, a reaction towards the past, — a reaction not of enthusiasm and living faith, but of discouragement, powerlessness, and fear, — a reaction religious on the surface, but ill disguising an indifference at heart to the interests of morality and the questions of the conscience. The Christianity of the Jesuits, that which is satisfied with ap-

at once excite abhorrence and compassion." — Despatch of October 26, 1774. "I shall never forget two or three bursts of confidence which the Pope (Pius VI.) let fall before me, from which I was enabled to judge that he was fully cognizant of the unhappy end of his predecessor, and that he was unwilling to run the same risks." — Despatch of October 28, 1777. See Saint-Priest, *Suppression de la Société de Jésus*. M. de Saint-Priest has made fruitless efforts to discover the statement announced to the minister by the Cardinal de Bernis, in his letter of October 26, 1774. It must be remarked that Bernis had no personal animosity to the Jesuits, and that, in the course of the negotiations, he had shown so much forbearance with respect to them as to draw upon himself warm reproaches from the court of Spain.

[1] *Les Jésuites jugés par les rois*, etc., pp. 173–178. Neither does Father Theiner, in his *Histoire du pontificat de Clément* XIV., the panegyrist of this pontiff, and consequently strongly opposed to the Jesuits, admit the theory of poison.

Digitized by Google

pearances, was alone capable of adapting itself to that state of society which the prophetic glance of Bossuet had seen beyond the eighteenth century as yet unborn.[1]

Another series of events had unfolded side by side with the affair of the Jesuits, to end in a still more striking catastrophe, and one which would shake ancient French society even more profoundly. The strife between the magistracy and the court had been renewed on account of the finances, as usual, but on a much greater scale; and, after a brief truce, had been pursued to the end like the combat between the two systems of government, one of which ended by overthrowing the other, on the eve of being swallowed up itself.

The narrative of the *Seven-Years' War* must have given some idea of the state in which the finances would be found at the end of this deplorable struggle. The annual burdens were immense; the perpetual *rentes*, by themselves alone, amounted to ninety-three million five hundred thousand francs, on a capital of two thousand one hundred and fifty-seven millions; and there existed besides a large body of life-*rentes* and tontines, without mentioning the floating debt and the alienations of the revenues. The future revenues had been forestalled to the amount of nearly eighty millions. The outside expenses of the war had not even been acquitted. The government was forced to pay, from 1762 to 1769, from thirty-three to thirty-four millions of arrears of the subsidies granted to Austria, together with the blood of France, for the purpose of supporting a wholly Austrian war! It paid to English speculators the debts of Canada, which it had refused to pay to the unhappy Canadians, and the claims to which had been bought up for a song by these foreigners.

The government acquitted its obligations to foreigners, but began by forfeiting its pledges to the nation. Two edicts and a declaration of the King abolished the doubling and tripling of the

[1] See *The Age of Louis XIV.* vol. II. p. 285. Concerning the various phases of the affair of the Jesuits, see the *Mercure hist.*, 1756–1774, t. CXL.–CLXXXVI., — the index of each volume points to whatever relates to the Jesuits; Saint-Priest, *Suppression de la Société de Jésus*, a work written chiefly from the unpublished diplomatic correspondence; Flassan, *Hist. de la Diplomatie française*, t. VI. liv. iv.; *Vie privée de Louis* XV. t. IV. pp. 44–63; W. Coxe, *Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. IV. ch. lxiv., t. V. ch. lxv.; *De la Destruction des Jésuites en France*, appended to the *Mém. de Madame du Hausset*, p. 166; Bachaumont, *Mém. secrets, passim*; Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis* XV.; *Hist. du parlement de Paris*, ch. lviii.; *Mém. de l'abbé Georgel* (ex-Jesuit), t. I. The agreement of the Jesuit Georgel and the Englishman Coxe, in opposition to Choiseul, is curious. — *Les Jésuites jugés par les rois*, etc., published by L. Viardot; *Hist. du pontificat de Clément XIV.*, by Father Theiner, priest of the oratory.

Digitized by Google

capitation-tax, and the third twentieth from January, 1764, but prolonged for six years the second twentieth, which was to have ended on the recurrence of peace, and the two sous per livre of the income-tax, which had survived the income-tax itself: it likewise prolonged for five years the gratuities of the towns, which were to have ended in 1765; after which time, according to the very words of the edict which had exacted them, "they could not be continued under any pretext whatsoever." The hundredth penny on the transfers of personal property in the nature of realty, with the addition of six sous per livre, was reëstablished. All these funds were not even to be employed in the sinking of the debt, but were to be paid into the treasury. The first twentieth, estimated at twenty millions annually, was set apart for the reestablishment of the sinking fund created in 1749: consequently, the first twentieth, instead of ending ten years after peace, in conformity with the royal promise, was prolonged indefinitely, or, at least, was transformed into a new real-estate tax, the just apportionment of which was to be fixed, as well as the equalization of the villain-tax, by means of a general terrier of the landed property, which was to be executed within seven years. The promise of the execution of a terrier, a project already conceived under Dubois, rested on no guarantee. Lastly, the royal edicts prescribed the liquidation, that is the compulsory reduction and redemption, of all *rentes* except those on the Hôtel de Ville, and of various charges, arrearages, life-*rentes*, and tontines, which was a manifest violation of public faith.[1]

The parliament of Paris, instead of registering these acts, warmly remonstrated, and requested that the operations of the sinking fund and the payment of arrears might be placed under its superintendence, and that a speedy termination might be fixed for the first two twentieths and the gratuities. It rejected the new taxes and the compulsory liquidation (May 19, 1763). The King enforced the registration in a bed of justice (May 31).

Public opinion broke forth indignantly. During this interval, the equestrian statue of the King, the work of Bouchardon, had been raised in the square, since so tragically celebrated, which then bore the name of Louis XV. The four corners of the pedestal were supported by Strength, Peace, Prudence, and Justice. One morning, the following inscription was found at the foot of the royal effigy: —

[1] Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II.

Digitized by Google

"Oh beautiful statue! oh beautiful pedestal!
The Virtues on foot, and Vice on horseback."

This was followed by another: —

"He is here, as at Versailles,
Without heart or bowels (of compassion)."

Public opinion loudly applauded the new remonstrances which followed the bed of justice (June 24, August 10). The parliament of Paris held a language therein such as had never before fallen upon royal ears. It stigmatized, in the plainest terms, "the manifest infraction of the engagements, most authentically contracted, and the promises most solemnly given by the King." It openly attacked the beds of justice as subversive of all legal order.[1] It affirmed that "the verification of the laws by the parliament is one of those laws which cannot be violated without violating *that by which kings themselves exist.* . . . The authority of the King is endangered thereby, together with the most essential and most sacred constitution of the monarchy!" . . . Remonstrances from the Court of Aids accompanied those of the parliament of Paris (July 23). This special tribunal, under the enlightened and generous direction of its first president, Malesherbes, assumed a moral authority which was altogether new. "The Court of Aids is unwilling to believe," say the remonstrances, "that, if the solemn promises of the King had been placed before his eyes, he could ever have taken it upon him to contradict himself so openly." Malesherbes then presented, in the name of his court, an elaborate picture of the disorder of the collection of the taxes, and the mixture of anarchy and tyranny that characterized the administration of finance, and showed the shameful secrets of this administration, screened by every means from the cognizance of the superior courts and all the regular bodies. Royalty had formerly established special tribunals in order to take away the prosecutions for taxes from the ordinary tribunals: now these special tribunals themselves were paralyzed by the unqualified despotism of the intendants and their delegates. If the tribunals attempted to take cognizance of the fiscal peculations and acts of violence which had become habitual,

[1] *Mercure historique*, t. CLV. pp. 47–137. — The complaints of the parliament prove, that, at the very moment when agriculture was rehabilitated by political economy, the fiscal agents were trampling upon the principles admitted by Colbert and all statesmen worthy of the name in favor of the agricultural classes. "Unfortunates are daily seen, compelled to pay their taxes by selling their grain, their cattle, and even their implements of labor." — Ibid. p. 147.

Digitized by Google

the Council of State quashed their sentences, or raised up causes for setting them aside. The Court of Aids added, that if any one dared accuse of exaggeration the pictures, so often presented, of the distress which was weighing upon the rural districts under this arbitrary régime, the court then entreated the King *to listen to his people themselves by the voice of their deputies in a convocation of the States-General of the kingdom.*[1]

It was the first echo of Mabli's idea, the first official appeal to the days of 1789!

The provincial parliaments worthily followed the example that had been set them by Paris. The remonstrances of the parliament of Rouen were at least as remarkable for their lofty and philosophic character as those which we have just cited (August 5). This parliament, as early as 1760, in again demanding its Provincial Estates of Normandy, abolished for the past century, had forcibly claimed, in behalf of the nation in general, the *antique* and *imprescriptible* right of voluntarily *accepting* the law,—a right which belonged to the magistrates in the interval of the session of the estates. The remonstrances of 1763 manifested the influence of the economists in the principles advanced by the Norman magistrates concerning the existence of this right of property "prior to all political institutions." The definition of the right of the citizen and the limits of the right of the State was conceived in the most liberal spirit. The parliament of Rouen claimed a statement of the revenues and the public burdens, and entreated the King to abolish the shame and scandal of the *royal orders on the treasury*, and to reduce the indefinite and inextricable multitude of taxes to a single and only one; that is, to demand of Normandy its proportional contribution to the necessities of the State, and to suffer it to apportion this itself.[2]

The parliament of Rouen maintained its opposition with even more vigor than the courts of Paris. The edicts having been forcibly inscribed on its registers by the governor of the province, it protested against them, and forbade their execution within its jurisdiction, under penalty of extortion (August 19). Its decree was annulled by the Council of State, and stricken from its registers by force: it replied by annulling the annulment. The

[1] *Mémoires pour servir à l'hist. du droit public en matière d'impôts, ou Recueil de ce qui s'est passé de plus interessant à la cour des aides, de* 1756–1775, Brussels, 1779, in quarto, p. 108, et seq.; Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. pp. 159–164.

[2] *Floquet, Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VI. pp. 370–381; *Mercure historique*, t. CLV. p. 263.

Digitized by Google

council rejoined in violent terms. The parliament of Rouen resigned in a body (November 19).[1]

The same resistance and analogous incidents were witnessed at Toulouse, Grenoble, Besançon, &c. The retrogressive spirit agreed with the innovating spirit in resisting the edicts. The fanatical parliament of Toulouse, still reeking with the blood of Calas and the pastors of the *wilderness*, opposed despotism, as it had slain the Protestants, in the name of traditions. Matters came to such a pass, that the governor of Languedoc, the Duke de Fitz-James, put the members of the parliament under arrest in their houses. The parliaments of Aix and Bordeaux protested with indignation against this *unheard-of outrage* upon justice. The parliament of Bordeaux took the offensive against the administration by the institution of a commission for the purpose of repressing the excesses of the fiscal agents (November, 1763).

The government compounded. It was the policy of Choiseul, more measured and profounder than might have been presumed from his imperious levity, to conciliate the great bodies that might be the props, as they were the obstacles, of the declining monarchy. The indolence of Louis XV. submitted to this policy, against which his pride revolted. A declaration of November 21 demanded of the parliaments, chambers of accounts, and courts of aids, memorials on the means of improving and simplifying the state of the finances; promised some diminutions in the gratuities and other taxes; and abolished the hundredth penny on collateral inheritances, — a tax which the parliament of Rouen had assailed with an altogether physiocratic exaggeration, as doing violence to property. The government gave hopes of abridging the duration of the twentieths, and also revoked the compulsory reduction of its debts, announced under the name of liquidation. The parliament of Paris registered the declaration, although the inflexible parliament of Rouen had written to dissuade it from doing so.

The system of compromise continued. A new comptroller-general, M. de Laverdi, was taken from the benches of the parliament of Paris, where he had signalized himself in the affair of the Jesuits (December 12, 1763). He began his career by sending to the treasury a large sum, which the farmers-general had been

[1] In the protest against the compulsory registration, it had declared that it would unceasingly invoke the authority of the fundamental laws of the kingdom, which associated the parliament with the ministry in the legislation. — *Merc. historique*, t. CLV. p. 297. See also, in its remonstrances, the thrilling details concerning the iniquities of the farming of the aids and the salt-tax. — *Merc. historique* of September, 1763.

Digitized by Google

accustomed to offer as a present to the comptrollers-general on their entrance into office. He ascertained that the farmers-general had made a profit of eighteen millions in three years on the salaries of their employés by deducting therefrom the three twentieths and other taxes, without accounting for them to the treasury. This incident will serve to show the state of the accountability. Laverdi did not lack good intentions for the reëstablishment of order; but something more was needed than intentions!

The parliamentary storm was not entirely appeased. The provincial courts were still agitated. The parliament of Toulouse decreed the arrest of its enemy, the Duke de Fitz-James, governor of Languedoc, and peer of France (December 11). The ministry took advantage of this undertaking to sow dissension between the parliament of Paris and the provincial courts. The parliament of Paris was urged to repel this encroachment on its exclusive rights as the court of peers; rights that were not recognized by the other parliaments, which claimed to be its equals in every thing. The parliament of Paris quashed the decree of the parliament of Toulouse, while warmly remonstrating against the executioners of arbitrary acts, and attributing to itself the cognizance of the case. The other parliaments protested in favor of their colleague Toulouse (December, 1763–January, 1764).

The government responded to the remonstrances of the parliament of Paris by a royal declaration, in which Louis XV. defended himself from the imputation of having wished to reign otherwise than by the observance of the laws and forms wisely established in his kingdom. He prescribed silence concerning every thing that had given rise to the declaration of November 21, 1763. The parliament of Paris registered the declaration.[1] The decrees of the council which had occasioned the resignation of the parliament of Bordeaux were annulled; and this court resumed its functions, so to speak, in triumph (March 10–14, 1764), as well as the parliaments of Toulouse and Grenoble, which were in the same category. This was the most humiliating step backwards that the government of Louis XV. had yet taken. The declaration demanding memorials on the finances from the superior courts, and the similar demands afterwards addressed by these courts to the inferior tribunals, had given an impulse to the public mind

[1] The trial of the Duke de Fitz-James was not ended thereby; but a royal declaration finally quashed the suit (January, 1766). The parliament of Paris registered the declaration only under the form of a *favor* granted by the King, which left the Duke *sullied*. He nevertheless became Marshal of France. — *Mem. du duc d'Aiguillon*, p. 18.

Digitized by Google

which speedily dismayed the cabinet. Political writings multiplied. Men already boasted of being as free as in England. The cabinet checked this effervescence by a prohibition to publish any writing concerning the administration of finance: the authors of these writings were merely authorized to transmit them to "the persons destined by the State to judge of them" (March 28, 1764).

The government continued its advances and concessions to the magistracy by way of compensation. The comptroller-general, Orri, about 1730, by the request of the farmers-general, who found the courts of aids too easy and too dilatory in the repression of offences with respect to the taxes, had caused four extraordinary commissions to be instituted, the judges of which, in the pay of the farmers, despatched the cases without granting further appeal, and earned their money by a celerity which was equalled only by their barbarity. The *Chamber of Valence*, above all, owed a detestable celebrity to a judge, Collot, who passed under the avenging pen of Voltaire.[1] Three of these commissions, dating from 1764, were replaced by new commissions taken from the courts of aids, and offering guarantees at least of morality and individual independence. The court of aids of Paris registered the institution of the one of these commissions which concerned it, while representing to the King, that, if extraordinary means of repression were necessitated by the multiplicity of the frauds, the frauds themselves were multiplied only through the excess and unjust assessment of the taxes, especially of the compulsory salt-tax.

An edict of December, 1764, on the sinking fund and the payment of the arrears due, also revealed the desire of conciliating the magistracy. This edict transformed the exigible debt, which the government was not in a condition to discharge, into a consolidated debt, and prescribed that one-tenth of all bills at sight, arrears of *rentes*, profits of the farmers, treasurers, etc., and salaries and emoluments, "except of those of judicial and police officers," should be retained for the purpose of increasing the sinking fund. A chamber was instituted in the parliament of Paris for the regulation of whatever concerned the sinking fund. The gratuities were again diminished. The collection of the second twentieth was to cease December 31, 1767; and that of the first, July 1, 1772.

This period of conciliation, or truce, was also signalized by an edict which regulated the administration of the towns and burghs, and restored to them the election of their municipal magistrates (August, 1764). This edict, remarkable for the character of uni-

[1] See *l'Homme aux quarante écus*.

Digitized by Google

formity which it stamped upon the financial administration of the municipal bodies, contained good provisions concerning the intervention of assemblies of notables in all the important acts of the municipal officers; but it took the revision of the municipal accounts from the chambers of accounts to give it to the bailiwicks and seneschalships, and, in case of appeal, to the parliaments, which did not improve the accountability. Another edict, of May, 1765, completed the first; reserved to the King the appointment of the *maires* from three candidates presented to him; and regulated the composition of the assemblies of notables, which were to be formed only of from ten to fourteen members, elected from the second order, under very aristocratic conditions. The praiseworthy portion of the preceding edict was not executed, and the financial disorder only continued to increase in the finances of the communes.[1]

A personage whose importance was a great disgrace to France had just expired, shortly after the reconciliation of the court and the parliaments. Madame de Pompadour had died, April 15, 1764, at the age of forty-two. Habit had insured her reign till her last moments. Scarcely were her eyes closed when she was forgotten. Louis XV. saw with profound indifference the rupture by death of this bond of nineteen years. The disappearance of the favorite was productive of no immediate results in the government: Choiseul seemed no longer in need of support. France, nevertheless, had reason later to regret this woman! She had done all the evil that she could do: there was nothing more to fear from her, and France was destined to sink still lower!

She had done some good in her last years by introducing to the King her physician Quesnai, and, through him, the economic ideas.[2] It is improbable, however, that these ideas would have

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. pp. 405, 434.

[2] She also protected *Lemercier de La Rivière*, who was not only one of the most distinguished disciples of Quesnai, and an eminent economist, but also an energetic, able, and patriotic administrator. He conducted himself admirably in the West Indies, where he had been appointed intendant of the Windward Isles, at the height of the disasters of the Seven-Years' War, in 1759. The credit of the King was dead: he substituted his own, and borrowed several millions in his own name, by the aid of which he revived Martinique, just freed from a glorious but ruinous siege. He could not, however, prevent Martinique from succumbing under a second siege, undertaken with overpowering forces by the English in 1762; but this calamity furnished him new opportunities to manifest a boundless disinterestedness and devotion. He ruined himself in endeavoring to lessen the losses of the State, and was very imperfectly and tardily repaid for his advances. He acted the part there of Joseph Dupleix on a smaller scale. Sent back to Martinique on the recurrence of peace, he successfully attempted the

Digitized by Google

been productive of much effect with the thoughtless monarch, had they not been simultaneously infiltrated into his councils by other means, as we have indicated elsewhere. However this may be, a series of very significant measures, of great scope, announced that the only one of the innovating sects that was accepted by royalty and the parliament was beginning to make its way from the domain of theory into that of fact. As early as September 17, 1754, the ministry, struck by hearing it constantly repeated that England owed her agricultural prosperity to free exportation, had granted entire freedom to the inter-grain-trade of the kingdom, without requiring passports or permits from one province to another, to the two generalities of Languedoc and the generality of Auch, with complete freedom of exportation to foreign countries. It was designed successively to extend the freedom of exportation to the other provinces. In 1758, a decree of the council had permitted the commerce and transportation of wool, both native and foreign, throughout the kingdom, without import or export duties. The bureau of commerce and its agents closed their eyes to the innovations that were effected in manufactures, despite the regulations, at Lyons, Nîmes, and elsewhere. Incentives were offered to the clearers of uncultivated lands (August, 1761). A declaration of December, 1762, reduced to a term of fifteen years the patents of invention, before unlimited for the most part, to the great embarrassment of manufactures. May 25, 1763, the permission to carry on the grain-trade within the kingdom, free of duties, was renewed, and authority was granted to establish granaries of wheat. Lastly, the celebrated edict of 1764, preceded by wholly *physiocratic* considerations, granted full liberty of exportation by French ships, and of importation by all ships, with a duty of one per cent on importation, and one-half per cent on exportation. The freedom of exportation was to be suspended wherever wheat should have been twelve livres ten sous per quintal for

application of the free trade preached by the economists. The interests opposed to this principle obtained his recall. The following reply to the Duke de Choiseul will give an idea of the character and moral worth of the man: "I was in bed, with my leg opened in consequence of a malignant fever, when, in 1758, I received the first order to embark: I saw nothing but the King's commands, and set out. I am again in bed, with my leg opened by a new accident, when I receive your letter, ordering a similar proceeding: I see only the King's commands, and I shall go. As to my domestic affairs, they certainly will not make me hesitate, when my health has not the power to do so. I am but one person, monseigneur: any sacrifice on my part for the King's service will never cost me any thing." It is unnecessary to observe, that the *King*, here, means the *country*. We take these details from the interesting *Notice sur Lemercier de La Rivière*, by F. Joubleau, Paris, 1858.

Digitized by Google

three successive markets. It was understood that this restriction would be merely temporary, and would only last till the advantages of the freedom of trade were comprehended. International entrepôts were authorized.[1]

February 13, 1765, letters-patent permitted the inhabitants of the rural districts, and of places where there were no masterships and trade corporations, to spin all kind of materials, and to manufacture and prepare all sorts of fabrics, in conformity with the regulations, and even to sell them in towns where trade corporations existed, after they had been examined and stamped by the bureau of merchants of each town. The rumor was circulated, on the one hand, that the masterships were about to be abolished; and, on the other, that the civil status was about to be restored to the Protestants.[2] The spirit of the age had greatly changed.

All the measures of the government were not, however, in conformity with the economic doctrines. For instance, the reduction of the rate of interest to four per cent among private individuals (June, 1766) could neither be approved by the theorists, who denied all interference of the State in the establishment of the rate of interest; nor the practical men, who were unwilling, at least, for the State to do more than second the natural course of events. Money was worth, in reality, more than four per cent; and the ministry had no other aim than to attract the money of private individuals to a new loan of five millions of life-*rentes* by making investment with the State more advantageous than private investment. The establishment of a new company for the slave-trade (1767) was something much more opposed to the principles of economic liberty, as well as of all philosophy and all humanity.

The economists had made such progress, that they well-nigh secured freedom of trade for the colonies; that is, the overthrow of the whole colonial system. The question was under discussion for two whole years in the bureau of commerce. The council of the King maintained, in general, the régime of reserved navigation, but made some concessions: two free ports were established at St. Lucia and St. Nicholas, in the West Indies; the duties between France and the colonies were diminished; and in May, 1768, complete freedom of trade was granted to Guiana.

[1] *Mercure historique*, t. CLVII. p. 143.

[2] See the letters-patent in the *Merc. historique*, t. CLVIII. p. 421. The Protestants were no longer called the *new converts* in the edicts, but the King's subjects, who *should have been* of the so-called reformed religion.

Digitized by Google

This was a trifling compensation for the disasters which the criminal lack of foresight of the ministry had recently drawn upon this colony. After the peace of 1763, Choiseul, dreaming of indemnifications for the losses of France, had cast his eyes on the vast tropical territory formerly called *Equinoctical France*, and had fancied that wherewithal might be found there to replace the Northern *New France*, Canada. The enterprise, so hazardous in any case, was conducted with deplorable imprudence. No pains was taken to study those beautiful and dangerous countries, where the luxuriant fecundity of Nature conceals so many snares for man. Husbandmen were attracted by brilliant promises from different countries, especially the Germans and Alsacians, more inclined to emigration, according to the tendency of the Teutonic races, than the French peasantry: they were embarked pell-mell, with a large number of the outcasts of the great cities, fit, at most, for those arts of luxury which would have been useless in an infant colony; and landed on the banks of the Kuru and the Salut Isles in the height of the rainy season of the tropics, without the necessary preparations having been made to receive them. Instead of the frame-houses which had been promised them, they were crowded together in wretched hovels. The provisions sent them were spoiled: disease broke out among these unfortunates, and their miserable encampments were soon nothing but cemeteries. Of about twelve thousand, probably two thousand at the most escaped. They communicated the scourge that was preying upon them to the former colonists of Cayenne, who were decimated and almost destroyed in turn (1763-1764). About the same time, a similar attempt, on a smaller scale, cost the lives of some hundreds of poor men who had attempted to settle without precaution at St. Lucia.[1]

The prosperity of St. Domingo, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and the Isles of France and Bourbon, which had revived immediately after peace, and the rich colonial productions of which were constantly increasing, caused France too easily to forget this lugubrious episode of Guiana, that land of tragic destinies. The progress of the French Antilles was not arrested by some disturbances occasioned in these islands by the institution of the militia, and by two more general causes, — the arbitrary tendencies of the governors and the impatient spirit of the Creoles.

In the interior of France, agriculture was improving in spite of the fiscal and other obstructions: the *pays d'élections*, more op-

[1] See Desalles, *Hist. des Antilles*, t. V. pp. 368-389. — *Mém. de Vergennes*, p. 255.

Digitized by Google

pressed by the administration of finance than the *pays d'état*, were precisely those in which progress was manifested, owing to the superiority of the system of renting the farms adopted in the north over that of hiring them on shares, still in vogue in the south. Since the economists had brought agriculture into fashion, and agronomic societies were being formed on all sides, the example and assistance of the large landholders, who turned anew towards the soil, encouraged the farmers, and the freedom of the grain-trade inspired them with an altogether new ardor, which was signalized by the general increase in value of the leases. The poor peasant felt the effects of the consideration shown to the farmer in easy circumstances. The population increased, although slowly and feebly: too many social causes obstructed its growth. In 1767, the learned and laborious Abbé Expilli, as well informed as it was possible to be with the imperfect statistical resources of the times, estimated it at twenty-two million souls (he allowed but six hundred thousand inhabitants to Paris). Two other statisticians, Messance and La Michaudière, estimated it at twenty-two million five hundred thousand. It must have increased three, perhaps four million souls, from that time to the Revolution, owing to the improvements due to the spirit of the age.[1]

The intestine peace, meanwhile, had not been of long duration, or rather it had never been fully established. For several years, an agitation had been prevailing in Brittany, which finally broke through all restraint, and extended over the kingdom. This agitation proceeded from two causes,—the affair of the Jesuits, and the violation of the ancient Breton liberties, which, so often perverted and repressed, were still claimed with obstinate constancy. As to the Jesuits, it was in this country that they had received the most terrible blows, but also in which they had the most persistent and restless partisans. The governor, the Duke d'Aiguillon, a crafty and profound courtier,[2] who belonged at once to the profligates and the bigots of the court, and who was at the same time the worthy nephew of Richelieu and the protégé of the Dauphin,

[1] Lavoisier and Lagrange estimated the population from 1789 to 1791 at twenty-five million souls; Dupont de Nemours, in 1791, at twenty-seven million souls. Among the practical ameliorations, due to the philosophers, must be cited the removal of the cemeteries from the cities. The decree of the parliament of Paris on this subject bears date March, 1765.

[2] He had begun his career as a courtier by sacrificing his mistress, Madame de La Tournelle, afterwards the Duchess de Châteauroux, to the King.

Digitized by Google

found himself pledged to the interests of the Jesuits, to please the Prince, his patron. Before the question was definitively settled, he organized, therefore, in the Provincial Estates themselves, an opposition to the parliament, in which La Chalotais was the ruling spirit; but he pursued a double, irreconcilable aim, — to rule public opinion in Brittany, and to wrest from it its privileges. The States, in which he had at first exercised a preponderant influence, owing to the recently introduced usage of subjecting the towns to the approbation of the royal commissioners in the choice of their deputies, soon violently turned against him, and united with the parliament. An order of the council, October 12, 1762, having dealt new and heavy blows to the constitution of Brittany, the hostility became almost unanimous. The parliament of Rennes, in concert with the States, in June and November, 1764, addressed strongly supported remonstrances to the King against the administration of the Duke d'Aiguillon, and the measures which this governor had suggested to the Council of State. The illegal participation of the royal commissioners in the municipal and provincial elections, and in the choice of the provincial assessors and tax-gatherers; the arbitrary collection of taxes not voted by the State, and not registered by the parliament; the waste, the dilapidations, the building of costly edifices in the towns at the expense of the province involved in debt, while the rural districts were crushed by the weight of the *corvées*,[1] and all pledges made between the States and the royal commissioners in this respect were violated, — such were the principal grievances enunciated. The foundation of all these remonstrances, from whatever direction they came, was invariably the same, — the awakening of that feeling of justice which is unwilling that men should be subjected to burdens to which they have not voluntarily consented. Philosophic law aroused here traditional law.

Choiseul disliked D'Aiguillon, whom he regarded as an aspirant to the ministry, and would willingly have sacrificed him; but Choiseul was not omnipotent, and D'Aiguillon was strongly supported. The Dauphin could not aid him much; but the familiars of Louis represented D'Aiguillon's cause to him as being that of the royal authority. The Bretons obtained nothing. The

[1] "An unfortunate *corvoyeur*, who paid forty sous capitation-tax, and who had nothing for his subsistence but what he could earn by his daily labor, was bound to keep in order nearly forty feet of the highway, estimated at nine livres a year." Besides, he was carried from one road to another, away from his home, etc. — *Merc. historique*, t. CLVII. pp. 632–647.

Digitized by Google

parliament of Rennes suspended its action. The King summoned it in a body to Versailles, and ordered it to resume its functions before he would reply to its remonstrances. The great majority of the parliament resigned (May, 1765).

The parliament of Pau did likewise in the same month, in consequence of its dissensions with its first president, who was devoted to the court. A president and three counsellors were arrested at Pau. The whole magistracy rose: the superior courts vied with each other in their protestations. Meanwhile the parliament of Paris became involved in a quarrel with the clergy, who, in their periodical assembly, had just manifested their regret at the expulsion of the Jesuits, and transgressed the *law of silence* by recurring to the eternal question of the Bull *Unigenitus*. The parliament quashed the acts of the assembly of the clergy of 1765, and even, retrospectively, the acts of 1760 and 1762, as contrary to the laws of the kingdom, which forbade these assemblies to occupy themselves, without the King's permission, with any thing else than the economic interests of the clergy. The council quashed the decree of the parliament. The clergy had granted a gratuity of twelve millions to the King. The acts of the assembly of the clergy were sent to all the nunneries and monasteries to be signed by the inmates. The council ended by renewing the *law of silence*, and referring to the King every thing concerning the acts of the assemblies of the clergy.

The fermentation continued in Brittany, where the discussion had become a sort of duel between La Chalotais and D'Aiguillon, the one representing despotism and Jesuitism, the other the philosophic spirit and the parliamentarian spirit accidentally combined. La Chalotais came several times to Versailles to endeavor to overthrow his enemy: the latter, or his adherents, were not content with successfully resisting these efforts with the King, and strove to destroy the energetic attorney-general. Pamphlets, satires, and manuscripts, the ordinary symptoms of agitation in a country where the press is not free, circulated in Brittany, and from Brittany to Versailles. Two anonymous letters, couched in the most disrespectful terms, were addressed to the King in person. Louis XV. was incensed, and trouble in the cabinet ensued. The letters were sent to the Count de Saint-Florentin, with orders to discover the author. Saint-Florentin was that mediocre and contemptible secretary of State who had cowered, for forty years, in the corner of the ministry whence the *lettres de cachet* and orders for persecution were despatched against the

Digitized by Google

Protestants. He was, like Richelieu, the uncle of D'Aiguillon. A few days after, Saint-Florentin declared to the King that a young master of requests, M. de Calonne, had recognized the handwriting of La Chalotais. Louis XV. flew into a passiou, without reflecting how improbable it was that an attorney-general, in correspondence with the cabinet, the ministers, and all the persons of importance in Paris, should have written anonymous letters to the King without disguising his hand. He wished to institute an extraordinary commission at the Arsenal for the purpose of trying the culprit and his accomplices; for the anonymous letters were already only one incident of an extensive plot against the royal authority. He recoiled, however, before the parliament of Paris. The commission was appointed and dissolved within twenty-four hours, and the indictment was brought regularly before the criminal court of the Tournelle (July 18, 1765).

The affair was protracted without being quashed. After much discussion concerning the course to be adopted, the King came to a decision. November 11, La Chalotais, his son, and three counsellors, two of whom were named Charette, were arrested at Rennes. The members of the parliament of Rennes who had resigned their seats were summoned to resume their functions for the purpose of judging their colleagues. They refused. This result had been expected. A commission from the Council of State was sent to Rennes to conduct the trial in the place of the parliament. The informer Calonne accepted the post of attorney-general to the commission! This young man, full of wit, daring, and immorality, was resolved to stop at nothing to attain success. The anonymous letters not being sufficient for the end proposed by the partisans of despotism and the avengers of the Jesuits, Calonne caused the private correspondence of La Chalotais, his son, and his friends, to be seized; and seconded by another master of requests, Lenoir, afterwards lieutenant-general of police, he founded on this correspondence an indictment, in which the open concert of the parliaments for the defence of their common principles was transformed into a kind of conspiracy, with La Chalotais as its head; and the union effected by this attorney-general between his parliament and the States of Brittany, into the beginning of a sedition, paving the way for a revolution in the kingdom, in conformity with the principles of the *Social Contract*, quoted and commented upon in the letters of La Chalotais.

A great noise and scandal ensued: at the rumor that the scaf-

Digitized by Google

fold was about to be erected for the courageous attorney-general of Rennes, the indignation of all France broke forth against Calonne, D'Aiguillon, and those of the ministers who lent them support. All the parliaments renewed their threatening demonstrations. Choiseul, hitherto reserved and neutral in appearance, forcibly represented to the King the improbability or exaggeration of the charges, and the danger of suffering the belief to gain credit among a public inclined to innovations, that men like La Chalotais and his principal parliamentary colleagues judged the doctrines of J. J. Rousseau applicable. D'Aiguillon, himself terrified, changed his tactics, and attempted to throw all the odium of the affair upon Calonne. The majority of the members of the commission declined acting:[1] the commission was dissolved, and the suit was referred to the *reorganized* parliament of Rennes, that is, to the minority who had not resigned, increased by a few renegades who had withdrawn their resignations, and some new counsellors created by the King. The parliament of Paris recommenced its remonstrances in behalf of the *true* parliament of Rennes, and the accused denied the competence of the *D'Aiguillon parliament.*

The violence of the excitement had been for a moment calmed, or at least suspended, by a mournful event. The Dauphin, Louis of France, had died December 20, 1765, at the age of thirty-six. He was of a melancholy character, resembling at once Louis XIII. and the Duke of Burgundy. War or public affairs would have reanimated his soul, indifferent to the pleasures and passions which govern the majority of mankind; but the jealous distrust of his father interdicted to him all serious employment of his activity. He was consumed with ennui. A disease of the chest, occasioned by imprudence, and aggravated by the voluntary negligence of a man that attached no importance to life, carried him off after a few months of languishing. There was an echo, as it were, of the regret that had formerly surrounded the tomb of the Duke of Burgundy; and the same illusions reappeared. More than one voice exclaimed, in the storms of '89, "*Ah! if the Dauphin had lived!*" It is probable, that, if the Dauphin had lived, he would have accelerated rather than dispelled the tempest.

[1] The commission had, nevertheless, done one useful thing: it had tried two hundred and thirty-five accused, who had been languishing in the prisons of Rennes in consequence of the suspension of the courts. The sinister details given on this subject in the Memoirs of D'Aiguillon (p. 24) forcibly show the consequence of this interruption of judicial proceedings, which had become the habitual weapon of the parliaments.

Digitized by Google

His heart was pure and sincere; but his confidence was misplaced. The La Vauguyons and D'Aiguillons, and other similar personages, would have been deplorable counsellors for him; and there is reason to believe that he would have blindly submitted to the influence of Rome and the clergy. "If I were called to the throne," he said, "and the Church commanded me to descend from it, I would do so." Such a prince would have been speedily crushed in an impossible reaction against the spirit of the age.[1]

He left three sons and two daughters. The three sons were all destined to wear the crown: they were Louis XVI., Louis XVIII., and Charles X. The eldest was to perish amidst the ruins of the ancient régime: traditional royalty, for a moment revived in the midst of a new system of society, was twice to fall again with the other two brothers.

A flash of sensibility seemed to penetrate the heart of Louis XV. "Unhappy France!" he exclaimed: "a King of fifty-five, and a dauphin of eleven!" He was seized with the fear of death on seeing his son expire. He made his will; reformed, if not his morals, at least the open scandal of them; and became friendly with his family. A man so degraded could do little more than change his kind of vice; and enlightened men began to fear lest the reign of debauchery should be succeeded by that of base and tyrannical bigotry. But the feeble desire to reform did not last long in Louis XV.; and the death of his son's widow, the Dauphiness, Maria Theresa of Saxony, an amiable and sensible person, who had acquired some ascendency over him, contributed to throw him back into his old habits (March, 1767). Her death revived the rumors of poison which had been whispered at the time of the loss of the Dauphin, and the coterie of the D'Aiguillons, the La Vauguyons, and the Jesuits, who had hoped to make use of the Dauphiness after the death of her husband, did not hesitate to propagate detestable calumnies against the Duke de Choiseul. They infected the mind of the new Dauphin, afterwards Louis XVI., with these infamous suspicions, and thus succeeded in irrevocably alienating him from the only minister that would have made any intelligent efforts to arrest the shameful decline of the monarchy during the last period of the reign of Louis XV.

Louis XV., meanwhile, had appeared to wish to prove to the public that the loss of his son would not weaken the royal power.

[1] *Mémoires du marquis d'Argenson*, p. 69; *Notice de Sénac de Meilhan*, appended to the *Mémoires de madame du Hausset*, p. 185.

Digitized by Google

He had significantly replied to the incessant remonstrances of the courts of justice, and the bold expositions of principles which they had vied with each other in displaying for years. March 3, 1766, he notified the parliament of Paris, in a bed of justice, that what had transpired at Rennes and Pau did not concern the other parliaments. The royal harangue, read by a counsellor of State, harshly reproved, in bitter language, the indecency and temerity of the combined remonstrances by which was manifested that *pernicious system of unity* which the King had already proscribed. "I will not suffer," said the monarch, "an association for resistance to be formed in my kingdom, . . . or an imaginary body to be introduced into the monarchy, which could only disturb its harmony." The maxims of the parliaments, summed up in a few lines, were condemned as innovations, which *contradicted* the institution of the magistracy and the true fundamental laws of the State. The King, in turn, set forth these fundamental laws from his own stand-point: "In my person alone resides the sovereign power, *the peculiar characteristic of which is the spirit of counsel, justice, and reason.* To me alone belongs the legislative power, independent of all authority, and subject to no division. . . . The entire public order emanates from me. My people are one with myself; and the rights and interests of the nation, which it is dared to make a separate body from the monarch, are necessarily united with mine, and repose alone in my hands."

He concluded by announcing, that, if the parliament of Paris did not set to the other courts of the kingdom the example of obedience, this scandalous spectacle of a rival contradiction of his sovereign authority would reduce him to the painful necessity of employing all the power which he had received from God to preserve his people from the fatal consequences of such undertakings.

The fundamental laws, according to the King, were neither more nor less imaginary than the fundamental laws according to the parliament; but this theory of divine right and mystical royal infallibility, this language of Louis XIV. and Bossuet uttered by the King of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*, must have sounded in the ears of the men of the eighteenth century like an ironical parody on the days gone by.

The King caused a resolution of the parliament, of February 11, concerning the affairs of Brittany, to be stricken from the registers. To a deputation from the parliament of Rouen, summoned to hear two of its decrees likewise annulled, he said that he had taken an oath, not to the nation, as the parliaments dared affirm, but

Digitized by Google

to God alone. The other parliaments received similar admonitions. The parliament of Paris nevertheless decided, March 19, that the honor and reputation of the officers of the parliament of Rennes, under indictment, should be held unspotted so long as their trial had not been conducted by competent judges. On the 20th it decreed new remonstrances, but acknowledged, as *inviolable maxims*, that "the sovereign power belongs to the King alone; that he is accountable only to God; . . . that the bond which unites the King and the nation is indissoluble by nature; and that the legislative power resides undivided in the person of the sovereign." This seemed like laying down its arms; but the parliament, if it abandoned philosophical and national right, abandoned nothing of its own pretensions, and maintained, by a long and subtle commentary, its right to resist the King in the King's name and for his interest, and in some sort to oppose to the accidental and variable will of the man the permanent will of the institution, of the royal abstraction.

The court, however, had gained an advantage in causing the principles of monarchical right to be confessed by the parliament of Paris in the presence of the democratic theories which were becoming diffused throughout the world; but this advantage decided nothing. Some months passed without any event worthy of remark. November 22, the King decided to conduct in person the trial of the Breton magistrates, whom the *D'Aiguillon parliament* dared neither condemn nor absolve. December 24, letters-patent declared all prosecutions and proceedings relative to this affair suspended and closed; the King being unwilling, it was said, "to find any one guilty." La Chalotais and his fellow-prisoners were set at liberty, but exiled to Saintes. Upon this, new remonstrances ensued from the parliament of Paris, the other parliaments,[1] and the States of Brittany, demanding that not a shadow of suspicion should be suffered to rest upon faithful magistrates, and that they should be recalled, and reinstated into their seats. The King replied that "their honor was not compromised, but that he would never restore to them his confidence and favors." The harsh truths contained in certain of the letters found in La Chalotais' desk had stung Louis XV. to the quick.

The exiled magistrates continued to demand justice, and not

[1] The parliament of Bordeaux signalized itself by its energy. One of its decrees was annulled by the council for having enunciated "as a part of the personal liberty of a Frenchman, and of his property, systems, the effect of which would be destructive to all monarchy" (October 2, 1767). — *Merc. historique*, t. CLXIII. p. 522.

Digitized by Google

favor. Brittany remained turbulent. The *D'Aiguillon parliament* was the butt of the hostility and contempt of the great majority of the country. Provocations, street-fights, and duels attested the public fermentation. The government vainly strove to terrify the malecontents by multiplying the *lettres de cachet*. The exasperation was raised to its height by the announcement of an important regulation, which the court designed to impose on the States of Brittany, for the purpose of giving the force of law to most of the arbitrary innovations that had been permitted by the Duke d'Aiguillon. Choiseul adroitly seized the moment to interfere again with the King, and made him understand that it was necessary to make one concession in order to obtain another. The States of Brittany were convoked in extra session (February, 1768); and the King commissioned them to substitute a duke and peer and a counsellor of State for D'Aiguillon and the intendant of Brittany, Flesselles, as unpopular as the governor.[1] Satisfied as to persons, the States compounded as to principles. They peaceably discussed that regulation, at first so angrily received; and accepted, at least, a part of it. They still, indeed, demanded justice for La Chalotais, and obstinately insisted on the reëstablishment of the parliament of Rennes as it had been before the resignation of its members in May, 1765. D'Aiguillon's position was no longer tenable: he resigned the governorship, and returned to establish himself at court, where, well received by Louis XV., and provided with a command in the troops of the King's household, he thought only of avenging himself by every means on Choiseul.

The King finally yielded before Breton obstinacy. The *true parliament* of Rennes was reëstablished in July, 1769: not integrally, however; for Louis XV., faithful to his rancor, would never consent to the recall of La Chalotais. The parliament of Rennes was not satisfied with this imperfect reparation, and undertook to avenge its friends and to pursue its enemies to Versailles itself; which finally produced the decisive crisis of the prolonged conflict between the absolute authority and the magistracy.

During these changes, the financial embarrassment, which had been the first cause of the parliamentary rising in arms, had continued to become aggravated. The royal promises prior to peace had been violated in 1763: the promises of 1763 and 1764 were violated in 1767. The levy of two more sous per livre on the duties of the farms, the extension for six years of the various duties

[1] *Prévôt des marchands* of Paris in 1789, and massacred on the day of the taking of the Bastille. The tragic names of the Revolution begin to be heard in history.

Digitized by Google

forming part of the general farms, the prolongation of the second twentieth for two, then for three years, and of the gratuities of the towns, and still other imposts (January–June, 1767), called forth reiterated and ineffectual remonstrances from the parliaments, the courts of aids, and the chambers of accounts. Laverdi had been submerged by the disorder which he had thought for a moment to restrain. Accountability was destroyed; all verification was impossible: there were accounts of the treasury which were not made up until ten or twelve years after the expiration of the administration of the officers of indirect taxes, the operations of which they were designed to retrace.

Laverdi had fallen into discredit by his extreme incapacity, and had rendered himself odious to the public, and distrusted by Choiseul, by the support which he had given to the Duke d'Aiguillon in the affairs of Brittany; thus turning against the parliaments, from the ranks of which he had sprung. Choiseul succeeded in replacing him by one of his own men, the counsellor of State, Mainon d'Invau (September 21, 1768). Laverdi left the debt increased one hundred and fifteen millions since peace: the sinking-fund had been only a bait; for much more was borrowed than was extinguished. In January, 1769, thirty-two million five hundred thousand francs had been forestalled on the revenues.

M. d'Invau did not make a happy beginning in the comptroller-generalship. His expedients, exactly similar to those of his predecessor, being rejected by the parliament of Paris, which repented of having registered the edicts of 1767 for the levy of extraordinary taxes, the court had recourse to a bed of justice as early as January 11, 1769. The edicts imposed by the King again prolonged the second twentieth to July, 1772, and various duties on consumption to 1788; created four million of life-*rentes;* and overthrew, by new and unjust combinations, the engagements contracted in 1764 for the redemption of the arrears due. The first president, D'Aligre, addressed to the King an admirable speech against the edicts, in which he concluded by affirming that the two great remedies in financial matters were the reduction of the expenditures and the simplification of the collection of the taxes.[1] Several of the provincial parliaments surpassed the parliament of

[1] He admirably sums up the financial course of the government: "The loans and the taxes have been, for a number of years past, the source and supplement of each other. For want of sufficient security at the time of contracting the loans, they become, on the first year's maturity, the germ of a necessary tax; and this tax, which is not sufficient, is soon aided by another loan, which announces a new tax for the following year." — *Merc. historique,* t. CLXVI. pp. 179–188.

Digitized by Google

Paris in boldness: that of Grenoble and others forbade the collection of the second twentieth, and waged a warfare of decrees against the council.

The comptroller-general would have asked nothing better than to follow the advice of the first president, D'Aligre. He attempted a middle course. He presented to the council a plan for the reduction of the expenditures, with the abolition of many of the financial offices, the continuance of the two twentieths for ten years, and the creation of a lottery of one hundred millions, payable half in specie and half in royal stocks at the market rate, the shares in which were to consist of life-*rentes*. The plan was rejected. M. d'Invau acted like a man of honor: he resigned his place, and refused the pension of ex-minister, which, he said, he had not earned. On the recommendation of the Chancellor de Maupeou, ex-first president of the parliament of Paris, summoned the year before to the cabinet, the King appointed to the comptroller-generalship a man who had been represented to him as being as bold as laborious, and fertile in resources, — the Abbé Terrai, a parliamentarian like Laverdi and Maupeou, but, like the last, formerly regarded with distrust by his company on account of his complaisance to the court, and raised in public opinion since the affair of the Jesuits (December 23, 1769).

Before entering upon the narrative of the grave intestine events which succeeded the accession of the new minister of the finances, and filled the remainder of the reign of Louis XV., we must cast a glance abroad, and follow the policy of Choiseul in Europe. Great catastrophes were in the course of preparation without as within France.

We must do justice to the memory of Choiseul by saying that his constant thought was to rescue France from the effects of the treaty of 1763. To reëstablish and reorganize her land and naval forces, and to put her in a condition one day to take her revenge; meanwhile to procure some indemnification for her losses, without giving rise to a premature renewal of the war; to strengthen and consolidate the system of the French alliances, without concealing from himself, that of her two allies, Austria and Spain, the first, which had cost her so dear, was infinitely less sure than the second; to rest his chief hopes of coöperation, therefore, upon Spain, and to encourage her with the warmest solicitude in the progressive course to which she was impelled by the counsellors of Carlos III.; lastly, to watch and strive to aggravate the embarrassments which England was beginning to experience, in order

Digitized by Google

to deter her from action abroad, — such were the ideas which guided Choiseul's conduct after the peace of Paris. We shall speedily perceive the fatal hiatus in his diplomatic plan; but the first part of his projects, the reorganization of the forces of France, was executed, so far as it depended on him, with much vigor and intelligence.

The accusation of wasting the public funds, often raised against Choiseul, was unjust. This minister, so fond of display and so prodigal of his own fortune, oftenest made a judicious use of the money of the State. It was not by the ministerial departments which were under his jurisdiction, it was not even and principally by the *royal orders on the treasury* of Louis XV. and the squandering of the court, that the finances were drifting to bankruptcy: the great cause of ruin was not, as we have many times repeated, the amount of the taxes that came into the treasury, but the amount of what was extorted outside the treasury, and that system of privileges and abuses which weighed upon all classes of society, and which had become, so to speak, society itself.

As to Choiseul, he had considerably diminished the foreign expenditures by reducing or abolishing the greater part of the permanent subsidies which France had been in the habit of paying, since the last century, to Sweden, the German princes, Switzerland, and sometimes Denmark, — subsidies which were very onerous, and of trifling utility. The only service hitherto rendered us by the Austrian alliance was that of having facilitated this economy, which a man familiar with the administration has estimated at twenty millions a year.[1]

The military affairs, above all, had been well conducted by Choiseul. He had carried on the latter part of the Seven-Years' War with sixty millions a year less than his predecessor, the Marshal de Belle-Isle, who had required one hundred and eighty millions. As soon as peace was secured, he replaced the expenses and effective force of the army on nearly the same footing as before the war (the effective force at one hundred and fifty-two thousand seven hundred and fifty-eight men, and the expenses at about seventy millions); but at the same time he accomplished, without increasing the burdens, a military reform of the highest importance. The organization of the army was extremely irregular: the different corps of the same army differed from each other in the number of battalions, squadrons, and companies,

[1] *Sénac de Meilhan*, appended to Madame du Hausset, p. 187.

Digitized by Google

which rendered instruction very difficult, and uniform manœuvres impossible. The corps had been raised at random, and disbanded in the same way. The uniformity of organization was almost completely established: the rosters were fixed in conformity with an invariable standard, so that thenceforth it was only necessary to increase or diminish the number of soldiers in each regiment according to circumstances, but not to create or reorganize regiments. The army thus acquired a consistency and solidity which it had never before possessed. The colonels were deprived of the appointment of their subordinates, and were required always to command their regiments themselves; the recruital of the companies was taken from the hands of the captains, who ceased to play the wretched part of traders in men. The term of enlistment was fixed at eight years, instead of six. At the expiration of a reënlistment, or of sixteen years' service, the soldier was entitled to half pay on retiring; after twenty-four years, to full pay, or a place in the Invalides. Manœuvring-camps were to be established from time to time for the purpose of drilling the troops and the general officers, who needed it even more than the regiments.[1] The ordinances of 1762 paved the way for the new army that was to avenge the affronts of the Seven-Years' War, — the army not only of the American War, but of the Revolution.

The navy demanded a reformation perhaps even more profound. A large number of the officers who had conducted themselves so badly were put on the retired list. The bureaucracy was reduced, and the pay of the naval officers was increased, as that of the army officers had been. Choiseul wished to go much farther: he projected the abolition of the privileged body of the marine guards, exclusively composed of men of noble birth, and the reorganization of the royal navy, with the admission therein of all the port-officers, privateers, and merchant-captains who had distinguished themselves in the last war. Such indignation ensued among the nobility, that the minister was forced to give way before the whole court combined.[2] He was not, at least, prevented from reorganizing the naval artillery (1767), and forming a body of ten thousand gunners, who were drilled once a week for ten

[1] *Mémoires de Choiseul*, t. I. pp. 77–160; *Journal du règne de Louis XV.*, t. II. p. 184; *Ordonnances de décembre*, 1862. It is seen from the *Mémoires* of Choiseul that the administration kept no physicians and surgeons in the military hospitals until 1759. Prior to this time, the physicians had received no salary, and the surgeons had been paid by the contractors who had the charge of the hospitals.

[2] *Vie privée de Louis* XV., t. IV. pp. 95–97.

Digitized by Google

years, and who showed in 1778 what they could do. The construction of ships for the navy was carried on with extreme activity, and on a large scale. At the end of 1770, France numbered sixty-four ships and fifty frigates afloat. The arsenals and magazines were filled. The beautiful forests of the Lower Pyrenees had hitherto been useless to the shipping: the Gave de Pau was rendered navigable, and the ship-timber of the Pyrenees descended the Gave and the Adour to the harbor of Bayonne, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants of the Basque provinces and Béarn.[1]

The attempted activity abroad was at first less successful. We have seen the deplorable issue of the Guiana enterprise. Choiseul succeeded better in the Mediterranean, in Corsica, than in the New World.

Corsica had been for some years almost entirely free. A great statesman, Pascal Paoli, had brought forth order, discipline, and a regular government, from the midst of this eternal anarchy. After struggles as obstinate against his fellow-countrymen as against foreigners, he had succeeded in subduing, and perseveringly directing towards the national war, the savage energy which the Corsicans were accustomed to expend in civil strife. Posted in the centre of Corsica, at Corte, he ruled the whole island, with the exception of a few maritime places. The French had occupied three of these places in 1756, without interfering in the hostilities between the Genoese and the Corsicans, and without departing from the character of mediators which they had assumed in 1751; but they had withdrawn at the expiration of two years, and Genoa had been forced to acknowledge, not only the impossibility of subjecting the *rebels* by her own forces, but the extreme difficulty of preserving her last remaining posts. Genoa entreated the French to return, in 1764, on nearly the same conditions as before, and restored to them the custody of Ajaccio, Calvi, Bastia, and San Fiorenzo. Negotiations were again commenced. The Corsicans sent Colonel Buttafuoco to Versailles to solicit the recognition of the independence of their republic, in consideration of a tribute equivalent to that which Corsica had formerly yielded to Genoa. The profit to Genoa had never exceeded forty thousand francs, on account of the cost of the garrisons. Buttafuoco at the same time took another step, which showed how far the ideal conceptions of the philosophers were beginning to make their way into real life. He requested the plan of a constitution from Jean-Jacques Rous-

[1] A new Code of the Marine, in sixteen volumes, which modified the great Ordinance of 1689, was promulgated March 25, 1765.

Digitized by Google

seau, who was still in Switzerland; and invited him to repair to Corsica in the name of the government over which Paoli presided. The admiration expressed by Rousseau, in a note of the *Social Contract*, for the patriotic constancy of the Corsicans, had won him devoted disciples among the educated leaders of these heroic barbarians. Rousseau had predicted that Corsica was destined to astonish the world: the prophecy was realized, but otherwise than the prophet had intended. The Corsican child that was to *astonish the world* was about to be born on the rock of Ajaccio.[1]

Had Rousseau decided to go to Corsica, he would have had the pain of witnessing the consummation of the oppression of his friends.

The cabinet of Versailles showed little fidelity to the Corsicans. It lulled them with vain hopes, and suffered matters to proceed to such a point, that the Genoese, losing all hope of ever reconquering the island, unwilling to humble their pride so far as to submit to the independence of their former subjects, and unable to discharge the debts which they had contracted to France, themselves proposed to Louis XV. the cession of the rights of their republic. May 15, 1768, a treaty, signed at Versailles, authorized the King of France to exercise all the rights of sovereignty over all the places and harbors of Corsica, as security for the debts due to him by the republic of Genoa. The cession was disguised under the form of a security in order to palliate the aggrandizement of France in the eyes of her rival, England, and even of her jealous ally, Austria. France, by a separate clause, gave Genoa an indemnity of two million francs.

The Corsicans learned with profound indignation of the price in store for their efforts and courage. Despite the vast disproportion of forces, they resolved to defend their liberty to the last extremity. Paoli hoped that the English, who had always encouraged him, would not tranquilly see France possess herself of so important a position in the Mediterranean. At the first attempt made by the French garrisons to penetrate into the interior, and to secure the communications between the places which they occupied, Paoli bravely endeavored to bar the way. He was unable to maintain his position on the narrow peninsula of Cape Corsica, which forms the northern point of the island; but he strongly posted himself on the base of this peninsula. The lieutenant-general, De Chauvelin, landed, meanwhile, with some reënforcements, and issued letters-patent in the island, August 5, by which the King of France summoned his *new subjects* to recognize his sovereignty,

[1] August 15, 1769.

Digitized by Google

under penalty of rebellion. *The General and Supreme Council of State* of Corsica replied by a fit and touching proclamation, in which it declared that the Corsican nation would not suffer itself to be treated *like a flock of sheep sent to market* (August 28).

Acts corresponded to words. Chauvelin, after a trifling advantage on the banks of the Nebbio, attempted to pursue Paoli beyond the Golo with an insufficient force. The French, deployed over too great a space, were impetuously assailed by the inhabitants, who, rising in a body, drove them back under the guns of Bastia with a loss of a thousand or twelve hundred men (September–October). It became necessary, in the spring of 1769, to send a whole army under a new commander-in-chief, the Count de Vaux. This general officer, who had forty-two battalions and four legions (light corps, composed partly of infantry and partly of cavalry), planned a campaign which embraced the whole island. Paoli was unable to sustain himself against so formidable an attack. An heroic battle at the bridge of the Golo was the last struggle of Corsican liberty.[1] Corte, the seat of government, was forced to capitulate. It would not have been impossible to perpetuate a partisan warfare among the *maquis* and mountains; but the eternal scourge of Corsica, dissension, revived with the reverses. Paoli, abandoned by most of his adherents, and better fitted, moreover, to direct a regular government than to play the part of a guerilla chief, embarked at Porto-Vecchio on an English vessel with a few chosen friends (June 13, 1769). England, which had furnished him no other aid than munitions, arms, and a few volunteers, offered him at least an honorable asylum.

The French used an inglorious victory with considerable moderation. The general, De Vaux, and after him the governor, Marbeuf, strove to reconcile the Corsicans to French rule by showing them kindness and equity. An amnesty, roads made by the troops, useful institutions, the encouragement of agriculture and commerce, the maintenance of the municipal régime of the *podestas*, and the concession of provincial States under the title of *General Consult*, signalized this conciliatory policy. The first general consult, convoked at Bastia, August 15, 1770, swore allegiance to the King of France: nevertheless, murders, highway robberies, and partial insurrections, bloodily repressed and often repeated, unceasingly protested against the conquest. The ma-

[1] Voltaire relates, that, in an engagement on the Golo, the Corsicans made a rampart of their dead in order to gain time to load behind them before making a necessary retreat: their wounded were mixed with the dead to strengthen the rampart!

Digitized by Google

terial ameliorations due to the new masters were, besides, more than compensated for by the abuses of the French administration and fiscal laws. It may be said that the acquisition of Corsica was not completed until 1789, when the Corsicans became the free citizens of a free nation, and solemnly ratified their annexation to France, — a ratification confirmed in a still more striking manner in 1796, when the Corsicans, after having been separated from France by the events of the revolutionary war and the influence of their hero Paoli, threw off the English yoke, and spontaneously returned to France, under the influence of another Corsican hero, become the conqueror of Austria in the interval of becoming the ruler of Europe.

The conquest of Corsica was to be the last territorial extension of ancient France.[1]

It seems surprising that England should have so tranquilly seen her rival take possession of a post so well adapted to command the Tyrrhene Sea and the coasts of Italy, and, above all, so disquieting to the possessors of Minorca. England, in fact, badly sustained her good fortune of the Seven-Years' War. This good fortune, by a contrary effect, increased, as if by destiny, in India, where every thing, exploits and mistakes, genius and crimes, turned to its advantage; but, in America, it appeared already on the point of falling by its own weight. The British government no longer showed either the vigor or the prudence necessary to rule the position of affairs within, and to maintain the ascendency without, which England had won by her victories: it forbore interfering in the affairs of Europe, and managed affairs no better on this account at home. Confused and fruitless agitation absorbed both ministers and parliament. The favorite of the King, Lord Bute, had resigned his office shortly after peace; and repeated changes in the administration had restored William Pitt, become the Earl of Chatham, for a moment to power; but his ruined health paralyzed his strong mind, little fitted, moreover, for public affairs except in heroic moments, and he was only the shadow of himself during his second ministry. He recovered something of his eloquence and authority only on returning to the

[1] *Mém. de Dumouriez*, t. I. liv. i.; *Mercure historique*, 1768–1770. See the tables of contents. — *Botta, Storia d'Italia*, t. IX. liv. xlvi. The conquest of Corsica gave rise to a quarrel with the inhabitants of Tunis, who continued their piracy as before, to the injury of the Corsicans. A Franco-Maltese squadron bombarded Bizerta and Soosa in July and August, 1770, and forced the Bey of Tunis to capitulate. In 1765, France and Spain combined had inflicted a similar punishment on the people of Morocco.

Digitized by Google

benches of the opposition. Meanwhile, London was a prey to the disturbances, without greatness or serious aim, excited by a popular agitator, the celebrated Wilkes.[1] A crisis in cereals, which we shall speedily see likewise in France, was distressing the counties of England; and a black cloud was gathering on the other side of the Atlantic. On the very day after the conquest of Canada, the antagonism had declared itself between the two conquerors, the English of Europe and the English of America. The mother-country had undertaken to compel the colonies to bear their share of the enormous debt (£150,000,000) which weighed upon it, and which had been contracted in part to expel the French from America. This share was demanded in the form of taxes and duties established by act of parliament. The colonies replied, that freemen could not be taxed without their consent; and that they were not obliged to recognize, with respect to taxes, the authority of a parliament in which they were not represented. We shall have occasion to recur to this dispute, which ended in such important events, and which, in 1768, already disclosed the possibility of a violent and speedy separation.

The anxieties caused by the colonies contributed greatly to render England so moderate or so weak in the Corsican question. A few vain protests were her only weapons. It has been affirmed that Choiseul spared nothing to procure diversions against England, and that his agents strongly encouraged the American malecontents. No traces exist of these pretended influences.[2]

The English accused Choiseul of much more detestable intrigues. The English ambassador to Spain, Lord Rochford, pretended to have discovered a plot, formed between Choiseul and the Spanish ambassador Grimaldi, to burn the shipping and arsenals at Portsmouth and Plymouth during the winter of 1764–1765, and to attack Great Britain in the midst of this confusion. This accusation is devoid of proof, while it is certain that an Englishman by the name of Gordon, who had not acted without instructions from very high authority, was executed in 1769 for attempting to burn the port of Brest.

[1] Not, however, without future results; for from these movements dates the progress of democracy in England, through the publicity which the journals, despite ancient prohibitions, began to give the debates in parliament, and by the introduction of meetings.

[2] Under Louis XVI., the ministers Maurepas and Vergennes made investigations for the purpose of authenticating these rumors, and found no document that confirmed them. — Flassan, t. VII. p. 152.

Digitized by Google

There is no doubt that Choiseul unceasingly kept alive the resentment of the Spanish cabinet against Great Britain, that he assiduously cultivated the germs of war which abounded in this direction, and that during the first years after the treaty of Paris, too much absorbed by the affairs of England and Spain, he was far from paying sufficient attention to those of the Continent. The consequences of this negligence were deplorable.

The catastrophe for which the prolonged anarchy of Poland had paved the way was approaching.

The Seven-Years' War, although it had not involved Poland, had rendered the humiliation of this republic more profound. The plans of the Prince de Conti and the Count de Broglie for its regeneration having been abandoned in consequence of the compact of France with Austria and Russia, the Russians had been suffered to traverse, trample under foot, and occupy Poland, without even apprising its government, and to keep military positions therein, under the name of magazines, even during peace. National independence was little more than a word to the Poles.

Two parties, meanwhile, among the magnates, secretly dreamed of regenerating their country by opposite means. Both desired the abolition of anarchy and of the *liberum veto;* but one, the party of the Potockis, the Branickis, and the Mokranowskis, aspired to establish order, through aristocratic liberty, by depriving the King of the distribution of office for the purpose of intrusting it to a sovereign council, several going so far as to project the abolition of royalty; the other party, that of the Czartoriskis, aimed, on the contrary, to render royalty hereditary, and, meanwhile, to reform the finances, uproot abuses, increase the royal power, weaken Jesuitical fanaticism, and improve the condition of the Dissidents, or the non-Catholics, whose oppression and resentment were a standing danger to Poland. These views had been those of a very enlightened French minister, the virtuous Marquis d'Argenson. The point in question here was not a theoretical preference for what is called the *stability* of hereditary transmission over the mobility of election: there were more positive and more special reasons. Had Poland been a true democracy, it might have been well to rid her of a phantom of royalty; but she was an anarchical nobility, based on an immense serfdom. Pure monarchy being therefore rejected by the free spirit of the nobles, and a democratic republic being impossible, since no people, properly speaking, existed, the most suitable government for Poland would have been a combination of hereditary transmission and

Digitized by Google

election, more or less closely resembling the English system, at least so long as a true people was not formed, and in order to aid in its formation. Safety consisted in the emancipation, first civil, then political, of the peasants; and an hereditary King would have favored the first of these two phases, at least more than an aristocracy would have done.

Logic was destined, to the end, to be banished from the affairs of Poland. The violent fickleness of the Polish character, such as it had been made by prolonged habits of disorder, was incompatible with that indispensable concentration of ideas and powers which sees and follows but a single object during long years. The Czartoriskis, the partisans of royalty, and the authors of a plan which France should have aided unreservedly, quarrelled with King Augustus III., and consequently with France, which had supported the House of Saxony since the marriage of the Dauphin to a princess of this house. They allied themselves with England, which was of little consequence, and with Russia, which was productive of great results. By affecting to serve the Russian interests, they dreamed of employing Russia unwittingly in the regeneration of Poland. As to the opposite party, it was destined to be swallowed up in the mass of the anarchical party of the petty nobility, which attributed to itself the exclusive title of patriot, because it wished blindly to maintain the traditions and abuses rooted in the country. The false policy of Choiseul supported the anarchical party, without attaching to it any great importance. Choiseul was persuaded that France had no reason to occupy herself seriously with Poland; that the four powers which surrounded this republic would counterbalance each other, and prevent its dismemberment; and that, if Russia and Prussia should agree to wrest a few shreds from it, they would not be long in quarrelling through their very contact. "Even though, contrary to all probability," wrote his relative, Praslin, under his dictation,[1] "the four powers should agree to divide Poland, it is very doubtful whether this event could interest France!"

Poland was abandoned in advance. When King Augustus III. died, October 5, 1763, all was already lost. While the two reformatory parties were aiming to profit by the interregnum to realize their projects, far different designs were entertained at St. Petersburg and Berlin.

[1] Memorial read to the Council, May 8, 1763, cited by Saint-Priest; *le Partage de Pologne en* 1772. Praslin was at that time the nominal, but Choiseul the real, minister of foreign affairs.

Digitized by Google

The plan of Catharine was to make a *Piast* king, a king of Polish birth, devoted to her; to raise up the Dissidents as a rallying-point; and to reduce Poland to a state of vassalage without dismembering it. Frederick II., on the contrary, aimed at dismemberment. He had thought of this in his early youth, when he was only Prince Royal. In 1733, at the death of Augustus II., he had presented a memorial to his father, urging him to invade that Polish Prussia which so inconveniently separated Ducal Prussia from Brandenburg: now, master of all the Valley of the Oder by the conquest of Silesia, he aspired to extend his possessions on the Warta, the great affluent of the Oder, and, at the same time, to realize the desires of his youth concerning the mouth of the Vistula. He was ambitious to regulate the disjointed territory of Prussia at the expense of Western Poland, already shut in between Pomerania and Silesia as between the blades of a pair of scissors. In 1762, Frederick had induced his devoted ally, Peter III., to accept a first project of partition, which the fall of the unhappy Czar had postponed, but to which the persevering and astute Prussian did not despair of persuading Catharine II. They were already agreed on one essential point, — the maintenance of the Polish anarchy. They strove to effect an agreement concerning the present conduct, withholding their views with respect to the future. The King of Prussia accepted the candidate of the Czarina, — a nephew of the two princes Czartoriski, Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, a former lover of Catharine.

The cabinet of Versailles neither knew how to oppose nor to compromise. Louis XV. feebly attempted at first, in accordance with Austria, to support the pretensions of the House of Saxony; but the new Elector, Christian of Saxony, dying a few weeks after his father, Augustus III., his infant son and his brothers, who had no chance of success, were abandoned. The most reasonable course, then, would have been quietly to effect an agreement with the Czartoriskis, and even, perhaps, to accept the secret advances of the Czarina's candidate, Poniatowski. Catharine herself offered to act in concert with France. It would have been good policy to have accepted this, for the purpose of afterwards supporting in their projects of reformation, in opposition to the Machiavellianism of Catharine, the men whom she was sustaining at that moment. Nothing of the kind was done: Choiseul rejected the Czarina's proposals, continued his alliance with the party opposed to the Czartoriskis, and strove to induce the Turks to protest against all Russian interference in Poland. Louis XV., meanwhile, or-

Digitized by Google

dered the French agents, through the medium of the Count de Broglie, the head of the secret diplomacy, not to thwart the election of Poniatowski. The policy of France was not even consistent with itself.

During the interval, the preliminary *dietines* were convened. The Czartoriskis found themselves outnumbered. They called in the Russians! The greatest of political crimes — appeal to foreign invasion — had become habitual in this unhappy country. The regenerators of Poland imitated the sons of Æson, who delivered up their father to the magician's knife in order to rejuvenate him!

At the same moment, a double declaration of France and Austria appeared, which recommended no candidate, but approved, in advance, of any free election, whether the candidate elected were a *Piast* or a foreigner. France formally promised to support a free election (March 15, 1764). The month after, Catharine II. and Frederick II. engaged by a treaty (April 11) to prevent the establishment of hereditary transmission and arbitrary power in Poland, to protect the Dissidents, and to secure the election of a *Piast*. They issued a declaration against any plan of dismemberment. The Russian and Prussian ambassadors at Warsaw had already prevented the publication of a plan to abolish royalty for the purpose of replacing it by a senate, and signified the opposition of their masters to all alteration of the Polish constitution in any direction whatever. This lively solicitude for the Polish constitution on the part of such neighbors suffices to give an idea of this constitution.

The Diet of Convocation, which preceded that of Election, opened May 7. In the presence of the Russian bayonets, the *patriots*, amidst the most dramatic incidents, declared the Diet broken off, and withdrew. The Czartoriski party remained, and attempted to accomplish its reformations. It promulgated a multitude of useful regulations; but, when it attempted to touch the taxation, and, above all, the *liberum veto*, and to replace unanimity by the plurality of votes, Russia and Prussia stopped it short. The Diet, or rather the minority which had constituted itself into a Diet after the withdrawal of the majority, gave way before the interdiction of foreign powers when it was in question to save Poland, and regained its independence only when the rejection of the petitions of the Dissidents was in question; as if religious fanaticism had inherited the energy which was no longer awakened by national feeling. It even went so far as to deprive the Dissidents of some

Digitized by Google

of the rights which they had preserved or recovered. The Czartoriskis were forced to yield to the mad reaction that broke forth around them.

The movements attempted by the *patriots* in Poland and Lithuania failed, despite a few brilliant strokes, during the legislative debates at Warsaw. The cabinet of Versailles was not in a position to keep the promise of aid which it had thrown out so lightly, and cared little to do so; and the Austrian cabinet, which was better able to act, and whose coöperation was necessary to France, was by no means willing to give this coöperation. The death of Madame de Pompadour, which Maria Theresa did not hesitate to deplore officially, as a "very great loss to the King and to France,"[1] had just loosened the bond of the Austro-French alliance. Maria Theresa and Kaunitz did not rely on Choiseul as on Madame de Pompadour, and had not forgiven this minister for having a policy of his own, instead of being the passive instrument of Austrian policy.

France and Austria, nevertheless, took a decided but wholly negative step; namely, the withdrawal of their ambassadors from Warsaw by way of protest against the violation of electoral liberty. This ended only in completely abandoning the field to the Russians and Prussians. Poniatowski was elected September 7, 1764, on the official recommendation of the two powers. Instead of the hundred thousand horsemen that formerly filled the sacred field of Wola to overflowing, but four thousand nobles came to the Diet where were celebrated for the last time the rites of the royal elections of Poland.

Public opinion was little excited in France. Men were accustomed to see foreigners impose kings on Poland: they perceived in it only a new crisis of an inveterate malady, and did not understand that this crisis differed from the preceding ones, and that it announced the end. Public opinion, moreover, as has been remarked by the most recent historian of the *Partition of Poland* (M. de Saint-Priest), was not at that time favorable to the Poles. The fanaticism with which the Jesuits had inspired this unhappy country, the tragic recollections of the affair of Thorn,[2] and the refusal to restore equal rights to the Dissidents, rendered the cause of Polish independence unpopular in this society, swayed by a cosmopolitan philosophy which comprehended the questions of humanity much better than those of nationality. Rousseau and Mabli

[1] Correspondence of the minister of foreign affairs, in Saint-Priest, 47.
[2] See vol. I. p. 127.

Digitized by Google

had not yet thrown the weight of their authority into the scale. Poland rudely shocked French, or rather European opinion, which Frederick, and, above all, Catharine, flattered with infinite art. *The Great Frederick* had only to live on his renown; but the Czarina set to work to efface the King of Prussia himself in the eyes of the philosophers. She took the place in the affections of the patriarch of Ferney that Frederick had occupied in his best days; entreated D'Alembert to superintend the education of her son; employed the most seductive grace in imposing her favors on Diderot; sent assistance to the families of Calas and Sirven; translated into Russian, with her imperial hand, the *Belisarius* of Marmontel; and announced to the philosophers that she had taken more than five thousand serfs from the Muscovite Church, thenceforth supported by the State (it is true that this was for the purpose of conferring upon the State the serfs of the Church), and that she was convening delegates from all the peoples subject to her rule, at St. Petersburg, in order to prepare with them a universal and uniform system of jurisprudence. She sent to Voltaire, by an officer of her guards, the letter of instructions, which she had drawn up with her own hand for the commission charged with the task of framing the plan of the new code. Almost every thing was French in this Russian letter of instructions, which was little else than a mosaic of the contradictory ideas and formulas of Louis XIV., Montesquieu, the economists, from whom she borrowed their *rational despotism*, in the most softened terms,[1] however, and even the parliamentarians. She believed herself sure enough of her phantom of a senate to grant it the right of refusing the registration of laws contrary to the constitution of the State. Whole chapters were copied from the *Spirit of Laws*. The words *citizen* and *country* were lavishly employed in a book designed for the representatives of a hundred barbarous tribes incapable of attaching any meaning to these great words. Just maxims, ingenious considerations, but, above all, religious tolerance proclaimed from an imperial throne, and a certain tendency towards the gradual emancipation of the serfs,[2] closed the eyes of

[1] She raised the enthusiasm of the economists to its height by summoning Lemercier de La Rivière to aid her in the preparation of her code. Lemercier did not arrive until shortly after the time appointed by Catharine. When he came, she had something else in her mind, and had already ceased to care for it. Lemercier returned, greatly disappointed.

[2] Catharine, however, entered only with reserve upon this point. She expressed a doubt as to the utility of serfdom for the good of the State, and affirmed, that, nevertheless, the serfs should not be emancipated in large masses, but that, for the sake of the

Digitized by Google

the philosophers to the illusions and absurdities in this great farce of philosophic legislation, designed for the Cossacks, the Bashkeers, and the Calmucks. Human nature is so complex, that Catharine may have been partly sincere in her rôle, and have believed in good faith in her fame as a legislator. The government of Louis XV. also took the matter in earnest, since it interdicted all publication of Catharine's *Instructions* in France, apparently as too favorable to parliamentary pretensions.[1]

The stake most important to Catharine was being played in Poland. The Czartoriskis were renewing their attempts at reform. The new King, weak and trifling, but by no means ill disposed, was inclined to second his uncles. The Diet of Coronation, which succeeded that of Election, encroached upon the *liberum veto* by adopting, *by a plurality vote*, various reforms and a customs law. An amnesty reopened Poland to the *patriots* who had been exiled after their fruitless rising in arms. Catharine proposed to suffer Poland to levy a standing army of fifty thousand men, on condition of an offensive alliance with Russia. This was refused; and a defensive alliance alone was offered her.

Catharine began to turn against her former protégés. Frederick II. urged her to this course with all his might. He knew that Stanislaus-Augustus dreamed of espousing an archduchess, and rendering himself hereditary; and that Austria cherished this hope. He had a double motive for inciting Catharine to become absorbed in the affairs of Poland: the first was to thwart the projects of Stanislaus and his uncles; the second was to cause Catharine to lose sight of a great design, which by no means suited the Prussian policy. The Czarina, jealous of the *Southern Alliance* formed by Choiseul, aspired to organize a *Northern Alliance*, in which Russia would have the preponderance. Choiseul received an intimation of this design, and thenceforth turned his atten-

progress of agriculture, it was essential that they should have something of their own. This *progress* has not taken place: the Russian serfs still live in common; and future revolutions will show the consequences (written in 1853). A descendant of Catharine is courageously beginning, at this moment, the great experiment of transforming the serfs into landed peasantry (1859).

[1] Catharine, more daring than Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, declared herself opposed to capital punishment, with a trifling reservation: "When a citizen, deprived of liberty, still has relations and a power that may disturb the tranquillity of the nation." — *Instruction* I. p. 77. It was doubtless by virtue of this reservation that the Czarowitz Ivan, the grand-nephew of Peter the Great, formerly set aside from the throne by Elizabeth, had just been murdered, August 16, 1764, in the prison where he had been immured from childhood. Elizabeth and Peter III. had spared this dispossessed pretender to the throne; but Catharine had no such scruples.

Digitized by Google

tion, with all the impetuosity of his character, to those interests of the North and the Continent which he had so much neglected. He resumed the immediate direction of foreign affairs, and sought to raise up embarrassments everywhere in the way of Catharine, but through hostility to Russia far more than through sympathy for Poland. The movements of Poland were to him only a means, whereas its safety should have been its end.

The Russo-Prussian tyranny continued to screen itself before Europe under the mask of tolerance. Reiterated appeals in favor of the Dissidents were addressed to the Polish Diet by the two powers at the same time that a *casus belli* was set up in the attacks on the *liberum veto*, and Russian regiments were sent to live as bailiffs on the lands of King Stanislaus and his friends in order to punish their faint attempts at resistance. The reformers yielded on the main point, — the *liberum veto*. The body of the *nation*, that is, the petty nobility, showed insane delight, as if this were the preservation of liberty. The *patriots*, in their turn, were supported by the Russians against the reformers.

The Dissidents, meanwhile, had not obtained full satisfaction. The Protestants *confederated* together in Polish Prussia under the direction of an agent of Frederick; and forty thousand Russians entered Poland to support them. The main body of the Catholic nobility, likewise at the instigation of the Russians and Prussians, formed another confederation for the abolition of the reforms which the Czartoriski party had established since 1764! The Russian agents insinuated that the Czarina would permit the dethroning of Poniatowski (March–May, 1767). It is appalling to see how far a nation can lose political instinct, and fail to recognize its real dangers and real enemies. The delegates of the great confederation of Radom, scarcely assembled, were surrounded by the Russian troops, and constrained to sign an act demanding the guarantee of Russia for all the laws to be established in the coming Diet, and complete satisfaction for the Dissidents. The Russians exercised the greatest violence in the elections to the Diet, and, when it was assembled (October, 1767), forced it to delegate unlimited powers to a commission which held its sessions at the house of Catharine's ambassador, and did little but write under his dictation. The Bishops of Cracow and Kiev, and the Palatine of Cracow and his son, having attempted to struggle against this insolent despotism, were carried off, and sent to Siberia. The commission decreed the equality of the Dissidents and the Catholics, save a few reservations with respect to eligibility to

Digitized by Google

the throne, and to the Catholics who changed their religion. The necessity of a *unanimous vote* in all the decisions of the Diet concerning the affairs of the State was sanctioned; and it was decreed that these laws could no longer be abrogated, *even unanimously!* Naturalization in Poland was granted to a multitude of Russians in order to form the nucleus of a nobility of the Greek faith. Some improvements were introduced: they were needed to justify the Muscovite supremacy. The right of life and death over the peasants was taken from the nobles; tribunals were instituted for suits between nobles and serfs; and pecuniary composition of crime, a relic of ancient barbarism, was abolished.

Choiseul, so tardily converted to the Polish cause, strove to regain by his activity the time which he had suffered to be lost. Turkey, yielding to his entreaties, finally interfered diplomatically with some energy; but it was impossible to move Austria. The Emperor, Francis I., had died, August 18, 1764; and his successor, the youthful Joseph II., who had been elected King of the Romans, March 27, 1765, by the coöperation of Frederick II., was ill disposed towards the French alliance, and inclined to a reconciliation with Prussia. He did not possess the reality of power, which Maria Theresa held in her still firm and jealous hand, any more than his father had done; but the minister Kaunitz provided for the future by conciliating Joseph, and served as a medium between the son and the mother. Nothing could be obtained from Austria but a secret promise of neutrality between the Turks and the Russians, should Turkey succor Poland by arms.

Unhappy Poland had finally awakened under the excess of oppression. A man of bold and lofty spirit, Krasinski, the Bishop of Kamieniec (or Kamenetz), had organized a vast conspiracy against foreign tyranny. The outbreak was not to take place until the moment of the declaration of war by Turkey against Russia. It occurred prematurely. February 29, 1768, a simple gentleman, named Pulaski, gave the signal to the celebrated confederation of Bar. The Podolian nobility rose in insurrection, and their example was followed in the neighboring provinces. Unfortunately, the cause of the confederation was endangered from the first moment by the blending of the old national sentiments with that religious fanaticism which had been unknown to ancient Poland, and which did not compensate, by the enthusiasm with which it inspired the patriots, for the power of opinion which it lent to the enemies of Polish independence.

Digitized by Google

The confederates swore to defend the Catholic religion with their lives, "until it was thoroughly rooted and reëstablished in their country;"[1] that is, until it had regained exclusive sway, and bowed the Dissidents anew beneath its yoke. They wore the cross on their hearts, like the Crusaders of old: their device was *Jesus and Mary;* and the Crucifix and the Madonna were the insignia of their banners.

At the news of the insurrection, Bishop Krasinski had hastened to Versailles "to throw Poland into the arms of France." He promised Choiseul the fall of Poniatowski, and the acceptance of the King whom France should designate, and who should be rendered hereditary. Choiseul promised pecuniary assistance, and despatched a plenipotentiary to the confederates (May, 1768). The difficulties in the way of the confederates were prodigious: they had no fortresses or rallying-points, and scarcely any munitions of war; and, what was still worse, the hostile peasants served as spies for the Russians in the Russian provinces, where the peasantry were of the Greek faith. The Russian ambassador Repnin, the real Viceroy of Poland, had forced the Polish senate to solicit the Czarina's assistance against the *rebels;* and, force or perfidy alike suiting his purpose, had caused the confederates to be surprised during the parleys. The French agent, Taulès, found their principal body in a pitiable condition, driven back, temporarily, upon Ottoman territory by the Russians. Taulès, seeing nought that resembled an army, and understanding nothing of a war of this kind, concluded that all was lost, gave them no money, and returned.

At that very moment, however, the partisan warfare was spreading like a conflagration. The Russians, seriously alarmed, had recourse to execrable means. They called in the Zaporogue (or Zaporove) Cossacks, that republic of brigands, intrenched for centuries in the islets and rocks of the Dnieper. The Zaporogues rushed down like a pack of maddened wolves, carrying with them the *Greek* peasants of the Ukraine and Podolia, who were animated by an inveterate hatred of the Catholic nobles, their masters. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, men, women, and children, were exterminated throughout Polish Ukraine. Sixteen thousand persons were slaughtered in the town of Ooman alone. More than fifty thousand in all were slain. The confederates of Bar, and the Catholic peasants of Great Poland, avenged them-

[1] Saint-Priest, *Partage de la Pologne*, § 3.

Digitized by Google

selves on the Dissidents, the auxiliaries of the Russians. Poland became a scene of universal horror.

Catharine again found means of evading the responsibility of the crimes of her hired assassins in the sight of Europe, and of washing out blood with blood. She sacrificed the wretches whom she had incited to insurrection, and delivered up multitudes of the Ukraine peasants to the tribunals of the republic of Poland. Gallows were erected by thousands for the murderers, amidst the bloody ruins heaped with the corpses of the victims. The Zaporogue confederation, so formidable to friends and foes, was, in the end, dissolved by the Russians.

A violation of Ottoman territory, committed by the Russians while in pursuit of a Polish party, at last caused the Porte to resolve on the armed intervention which had been instigated by Choiseul. The Sultan Mustapha declared war on the Czarina, after a last summons to evacuate Poland (September, 1768). Choiseul relied much on the Khan of Little Tartary, Crim Gherai, a partially Gallicized Mussulman, who had caused Molière to be translated, and who had been one of the first to introduce European ideas into Islamism. The Khan, the vassal of Turkey, fell upon New Servia, and carried off thirty-five thousand Greek, French, and German colonists, whom Catharine had attracted and settled by dint of promises between the Dniester and the Dnieper. He was about to push his enterprises farther, when he died, very opportunely for Russia, and with exceedingly suspicious symptoms. This sudden death disorganized the Tartars of the Black Sea, and deprived the Ottoman armies of an intelligent and courageous guide. Catharine had time to reflect. She dismissed the deputies convened for the preparation of the famous *Code*, and thought only of war. A bank was established, the notes of which were made a legal tender, for the purpose of drawing all the specie of the empire into the hands of the Russian government. Frederick II. began to pay the Czarina an annual subsidy of three millions, notified the Swedes that he should take sides against them if they allied themselves with the Turks, and counselled Catharine concerning the plan of the campaign.

In the spring of 1769, the Russians assumed the offensive, and entered Bessarabia. Their first attack on the fortified town of Chotyn was repulsed. They returned to the charge, and encountered the prodigious masses led by the grand vizier. Firm and patient, but few in numbers, and badly commanded, they were on the point of destruction from the errors of their leaders, when

Digitized by Google

they were saved by the frightful lack of discipline of the Ottoman army. This army, which had hemmed in the Russians, and reduced them to the last extremity, was suddenly seized with a panic, and dispersed (September, 1769). Moldavia and Wallachia were wholly abandoned to the astonished conquerors.

The confederates of Bar were not discouraged. Although a prey to the intestine dissensions which were the eternal scourge of Poland, they had taken advantage of the formidable diversion of the Turks to extend the war to Lithuania. The indignation aroused by the atrocities of the Russian leaders, the Drewitzes and Suwarrows, those tigers with human faces, swelled the ranks of the patriots. Delegates from one hundred and seventy-nine districts of Poland and Lithuania assembled in November, 1769, at Biala, on the frontier of Austrian Silesia, and resolved to make a last effort to expel the foreigners. The agents of the confederation were commissioned to consult the political philosophers of France on the constitution to be given to Poland, once freed; a proof of the marvellous power of the spirit of the age. The insurrection, commenced in the name of the *Holy Father at Rome*, ended at Rousseau. Philosophy was thenceforth divided between the Russo-Prussian and the Polish causes. Catharine had won Voltaire and Diderot: the Poles invoked Rousseau and Mabli, who had never shared the illusions of Ferney and the Encyclopædia concerning the *Semiramis* of the North.

The attitude of King Stanislaus Augustus, the Czartoriskis, and the Senate, was significant. Despite the threats of Catharine, the Czartoriski party had maintained the official neutrality of the Polish government between Russia and Turkey, and the troops of the crown had ceased to second the Russians against the confederates. A compromise between the two Polish parties was possible and desirable.[1] Unhappily, neither the confederates nor their protector Choiseul understood this. Choiseul sent artillerymen, engineers, and money, with an officer who had signalized himself in Corsica, Colonel Dumouriez, afterwards so celebrated (July, 1770); but this agent, for the interest of the House of Saxony, opposed those of the Polish leaders who desired the fusion of the parties, and contributed to induce the confederation to

[1] "You ought," wrote Rousseau, a little later, "either to cut off the head of the King that has been given you by foreigners, or without regard to his first election, which is altogether void, to elect him anew;" that is, either to crush out by a terrible example the inveterate crime of appealing to foreign powers, or unreservedly to accept the repentance of the crowned culprit.

Digitized by Google

decree the dethronement of Poniatowski. Dumouriez served the Poles better in battle than in council. At the close of 1770, the confederation, with the Carpathians in its rear, the masters of a few places partially fortified, and victorious in various engagements, was in a better military condition than it had yet been found.

This was a deceitful success, which was only to accelerate the catastrophe. During the interval, the events which transpired in the heart of the Ottoman empire overthrew the hopes of Choiseul and the confederates. Prophecies, already ancient, were rife among the Greeks, of a *fair-haired nation* that was destined to drive the Turks from Europe. This tradition, and the conformity of religion, had long since turned the eyes of the Greeks and the Slaves, the subjects of Turkey, towards Russia. The German Münnich, the most intelligent man that had governed or served Russia since Peter the Great, had been the first to attempt to take advantage of the Greco-Slavic sympathies. Catharine had resumed this idea, and applied it on a large scale. She had instigated a great conspiracy against the Ottoman empire, the principal centres of which were Montenegro and the Morea. The insurrection in Montenegro broke out prematurely, and was repressed; but the agitation continued in Greece. In the autumn of 1769, twelve Russian ships of the line crossed the Sound, and touched at the English ports, where British officers and sailors installed themselves on board to instruct the ignorant Russian mariners. England sacrificed her essential political interests to the commercial interests of the moment (she had obtained the renewal of a commercial treaty with Russia), and to the pleasure of thwarting France. The squadron from the Gulf of Finland entered the Mediterranean in November, 1769. France and Spain did not attack the Russians, for fear that England would support the latter. They were not ready for maritime war; and, above all, Louis XV. dreaded it, although it was desired by Choiseul. Public opinion, moreover, did not favor war on this occasion. Catharine II. caused the deliverance of Greece, of the country of Sophocles and Leonidas, to be celebrated in advance by all the trumpets of renown; and the aged Voltaire wept for joy at the thought that Athens would be free.

Catharine had desired to embrace the whole Ottoman empire in a quadruple attack by land and sea, and to overthrow it at a single blow. The Russian forces did not correspond to this gigantic plan. At the appearance of the first Russian vessels, the

Digitized by Google

mountaineers of the Morea, already called the *Lacedemonians* at Ferney, rose in insurrection, drawing in with them some of the Moreot nations, and Missolonghi, that spot of mournful and glorious destinies. The Russians, however, had scarcely any land forces, and were unable to defend their allies against the torrent of Albanians that the Porte precipitated upon the rebellious country. The insurrection was stifled in rivers of blood. Both Russians and Greeks had been reciprocally deceived concerning their respective forces. It cost the unhappy Greeks dear. As to the Russians, they consoled themselves by a great naval victory. July 5, 1770, their fleet destroyed that of the capitan-pacha in the Gulf of Tchesme, between Scio and the coast of Smyrna. They might have struck a more decisive blow. The Englishman Elphinstone, the real author of their victory, attempted to force the passage of the Dardanelles, which was not defended, and to set sail directly for Constantinople. The Russian commander, Alexis Orloff, the murderer of Peter III., refused to advance until the arrival of reenforcements. This delay saved the capital of the Turkish empire. The Hungarian, Tott, the agent of Choiseul, organized the Ottoman artillery, and put the Dardanelles in a defensive posture.

Of the three other attacks prescribed by Catharine, two failed, —the Georgian expedition, and the maritime armament fitted out in the Don; but the third was successful. While an army corps confronted the Turks on the Danube, another corps fell back on Tartar Moldavia, or Bessarabia. July 30, 1770, the Ottoman army, which was marching to the assistance of Bessarabia, was routed after a bloody battle on the Kagool, between the Danube and the Dniester. The Tartars that dwelt between the Danube and the Dneiper submitted, and the greater part were transported to the Ukraine to make room for Russian colonists on the shores of the Black Sea. September 26, Bender, the stronghold of Bessarabia, was carried by storm after an heroic defence. At the end of the season, the Turks abandoned Ismail, which commanded the mouths of the Danube, and all on the north of that river.

The reaction of the disasters of the Ottoman empire was destined to be fatal to the Poles and to Choiseul, and very favorable to the projects cherished by Frederick. As soon as he saw Russia engaged in war against the Turks, the King of Prussia had insinuated to Catharine, that, in order to deter Austria from opposing the progress of the Russian arms in Turkey, it would be well to agree upon the partition of certain of the Polish provinces

Digitized by Google

between Russia, Austria, and Prussia.[1] Catharine had paid no heed to this; but Frederick had prepared means to force her to listen. After adroitly conducted intrigues for the purpose of increasing the coolness between France and Austria, he had obtained an interview with the young Emperor, Joseph II., at Neisse in Silesia. The resentment of the court of Vienna against the conqueror of this fair province seemed wholly forgotten. It was agreed to remain neutral in the event of a rupture between France and England. The question of the dismemberment of Poland was broached. Joseph II., however, who was dependent upon his mother, had not the power to agree upon any thing. After this conference, Austria showed herself much more sympathetic towards the Poles, and invited the general council of the confederation to remove to Eperies in Hungary in order to be safe from the Russian troops. Joseph II. visited the Polish leaders there, and expressed much interest in them at the time when he was already planning the destruction of their country. These advances were a means of disquieting and influencing the Czarina. In July, 1770, Frederick went to Neustadt in Moravia to return the visit of Joseph II. This time, Joseph was accompanied by the minister Kaunitz, and, with him, the will of Maria Theresa. The news from Tchesme and Kagool was brought to Neustadt by a Turkish seraskier, who came to solicit the mediation of Frederick between the Sultan and the Czarina. Frederick offered to share this mediation with Austria. The two future mediators resolved to propose to Russia a compensation in Poland for the Turco-Danubian provinces, which Austria could not leave in the hands of Catharine, and agreed to take equal shares in order to maintain the balance of power.

Meanwhile, Austria, who had set to work to revive ancient claims on the *starosties* of her frontier, occupied the Polish district of Zips, locked within Hungary; and Frederick recommenced his atrocious exactions on the most extensive scale in Polish Prussia, whence he carried off every thing,—money and provisions, young men for his army, and young girls to marry to his Prussians, with dowries wrung from their parents.

Embarrassments and perils multiplied around Choiseul, who had taken the Ottoman empire for a support against Russia, and who felt this support escaping from his hand. He vainly sought to delude himself concerning the defection of Austria and her

[1] *Œuvres de Frédéric II.*, t. VI. p. 27, new edit. in 8vo. Berlin, 1846, 1847.

Digitized by Google

union with Prussia. The lying protests of Kaunitz did not deceive him: the quite recent marriage of the Dauphin to an archduchess (Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette, May 18, 1770), a marriage desired, and, so to speak, enforced, by Maria Theresa, had in no wise prevented the interview at Neustadt. France was drifting towards a double continental and maritime war, amidst a violent financial crisis. Doubtless it was still possible to prevent the national dismemberment of Poland; for the Czarina, at this moment, continued to refuse it. By sacrificing to Catharine both the confederates of Bar and the reformers of the other party, the shadow of a republic, Poland by name, and Russia in fact, could still be maintained without a nominal change of territory. This was unimportant. Choiseul did not think of an arrangement with Catharine; but he attempted to regain Austria. He caused the throne of Poland to be offered to Maria Theresa for the husband of one of her daughters, the Duke of Saxe-Teschen.[1] Austria refused. It was highly probable, therefore, that, in order truly to liberate Poland, it would be necessary to contend with Russia, Austria, and Prussia united. On the other hand, war with England was imminent. Spain was disputing the possession of the Falkland Isles with England; the Spaniards had already had recourse to violence in these remote parts; and the cabinet of Madrid was claiming assistance from France. The rumors of maritime war had already caused a reaction in the Archipelago. The Russian squadron was disorganized by the recall of the English sailors. England was concentrating her naval forces, and was also beginning to think that the Russians were progressing somewhat too rapidly in the East.

A general war did not take place. Choiseul, who had been for some time undermined by other intrigues, fell from power, December 24, 1770; and, with him, the last feeble chance of safety that remained to Poland.[2]

We have been forced to pass through much ignominy since the death of Louis the Great, but nothing comparable to that which paved the way for and followed the fall of Choiseul. France seemed sinking deeper and deeper into an infernal pit, not of flames, but of mire.

[1] The one who came with his wife to bombard Lille in 1792.

[2] Dumouriez had planned an extensive campaign for 1771. He designed to organize a regular army in Poland, and to make an incursion into Russia itself; but the execution would have doubtless fallen far short of this daring conception. — See his *Mémoires*, t. I. ch. vii. and viii.

Digitized by Google

After the death of the Queen, Maria Leczinska (June 24, 1768),[1] Louis XV., at first considerably affected by this new warning, had not been long in throwing off the kind of relative decency which had reappeared at court during two or three years, and had plunged again into gross debauchery, with new frenzy, led on by the aged Richelieu, that eternal tempter. It is pretended that a sister of Choiseul, Madame de Grammont, a haughty, intelligent, and energetic woman, devoted to her brother (rumors of incest were current with respect to them), had unsuccessfully aspired to the inheritance of Madame de Pompadour, or rather of Madame de Châteauroux, whom she more resembled. The pride of the Choiseuls was not that which is inspired by virtue. Be this as it may, Louis fell into far different snares. In the autumn of 1768, the purveyor of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, the too celebrated valet de chambre Lebel, not knowing to what to have recourse in order to dispel the ennui of the palled monarch, ventured one day to bring him a woman kept by a *chevalier d'industrie*, named Du Barri, who made use of her prostituted charms to attract custom to a gaming-house. History is compelled to notice such turpitude: this creature was destined to reign over France! Jeanne Vaubernier inspired the sexagenarian debauchee with such intoxication, that he would never more separate from her. He installed her at Versailles; married her nominally to the elder brother of her former lover; caused her to be presented at court under the name of the Countess du Barri; and introduced her to his daughter, and afterwards to the young wife of his grandson! The drawing-rooms of Louis the Great were invaded by strange guests from the lowest haunts of Parisian debauchery. This depraved court, accustomed for half a century to every kind of scandal, recoiled, however, as if from contact with unclean beasts. The most sullied women refused to approach the strange favorite. The haughty Choiseul could not resign himself to conciliate such an influence: he rejected the advances of the *Countess*, and strove to make the King blush at *succeeding all France*. All was useless. When it was perceived that the old man was wholly and definitively subjugated, a portion of the court began to give way. A *Du Barri party* was formed: the enemies of Choiseul made overtures to this new power, and the Duke d'Aiguillon served as the medium of an at least indirect coalition between the pious cabal and the party of the brothels. The late Dauphin

[1] Her father, the aged Stanislaus, had preceded her, February 23, 1766; and Lorraine had been definitively annexed to France.

Digitized by Google

was no longer present to impose on his friends respect for themselves and their cause.

New personages, meanwhile, had made their way into the ministry under the auspices of Choiseul; reserving to themselves the right to unite with his enemies, should it be to their profit. These were not docile or harmless mediocrities like their predecessors in the seals and the comptroller-generalship. Maupeou, appointed chancellor in 1768, and Terrai, called to the comptroller-generalship in December, 1769, by the recommendation of Maupeou, his former colleague in the parliament, were men fitted for bold and adventurous strokes, such as arise in stormy times; alike audacious, unscrupulous, and faithless: the one, the chancellor, in the guise, at first pliant, then arrogant, of a freedman of the Cæsars; the other, the comptroller, in the shameless guise of a satyr, the face and manners of which he possessed. The Abbé Terrai had been represented to the King and Choiseul as the only one capable of discovering, and, above all, of imperturbably carrying out, the extreme measures which had become necessary to prevent the immediate subversion of the finances. Terrai, indeed, possessed a clear and vigorous mind in conjunction with his immorality. Insane depravity had led the government to financial ruin: intelligent depravity was about to suspend this ruin for a moment. Terrai knew nothing of what was just and unjust; but he knew very well what was possible and impossible.

He saw, that, at the close of 1769, the expenditure exceeded the revenue sixty-three millions.[1] The exigible debt amounted to one hundred and ten millions; the anticipation of the future revenues surpassed one hundred and sixty-one millions; the revenues of the year 1770 with those of the first two months of 1771 had been forestalled; and the bankers and financiers refused to make new advances for 1770. The principal branches of the administration were about to be suspended for want of resources. In the presence of the opposition of the parliament and the decline of credit, it was impossible to have recourse to new taxes, loans, and advances. Some inheritors of the traditions of Law proposed a paper currency. Terrai did not believe in it. Since no willingness was manifested to enter upon great reforms, but two resources remained, — economy and the reduction of the debt, or partial bank-

[1] This is the estimate given by M. Mainon d'Invau. According to documents in possession of the Terrai Family, the real deficit would have amounted to seventy-six million seventy thousand four hundred francs. We are ignorant of the cause of this difference of estimates.

Digitized by Google

ruptcy. The kind of economy that could be proposed to such a government would be insufficient of itself alone; and the reduction of the debt, on its side, must have been carried to total bankruptcy; which seemed much too rash, even to Terrai. He formed his plan in conformity with the two resources united. He proposed the diminution of the expenses of the King's household and the various ministries, and commenced his operations on the debt.

January 7, 1770, he suspended the sinking-fund for eight years, and assigned its revenues (eighteen millions annually) to the redemption of the anticipations. January 18, he converted the tontines into simple life-*rentes* (a spoliation, the value of which he estimated at not less than one hundred and fifty millions, distributed through a considerable number of years); and, January 20, he reduced the arrears of a quantity of stocks, previously consolidated at five per cent, to four and two and a half per cent. January 29 and February 4, a new reduction was prescribed in the pensions, the effect of which was retroactive;[1] the profits of the farms, etc. February 18, the payment of rescripts on the general receipts, notes on the farms, and other stocks given to the financiers who had advanced funds to the treasury, amounting to at least two hundred millions, was indefinitely suspended. From four and a half to five per cent interest was assigned to these stocks, and a new sinking-fund was established for them. A loan of one hundred and sixty millions at four per cent on the Hôtel de Ville (the privileged class of *rentes*) was opened, payable, half in the stocks, the interest and arrears of which had been reduced January 20, and the other half in the rescripts suspended February 18. This was a new, indirect, and partial consolidation. At the same time, the legal interest on the constitutions of *rentes* was restored to five per cent in order to revive the circulation of specie. Violent measures, nevertheless, continued. By the side of a new loan of twenty-five millions on the receivers-general, a forced loan of twenty-eight millions was levied on the secretaries of the King and other royal officers (February). All redemptions to be effected by corporations, communes, etc., who had borrowed either for the King or for themselves, were suspended for four years, and the funds were diverted to the extinc-

[1] It was announced that the reduction would be proportional; and, in fact, the pensions of average amount were subjected to a reduction proportionally larger than that of the small ones; but the largest, those of the courtiers and the favorites, were spared. Falsehood was everywhere! — See Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 168.

Digitized by Google

tion of the rescripts and assignments (February 25). The judicial deposits were speedily violated, and the specie was replaced by the uncurrent notes of the treasury. On the other hand, the taxes were, so to speak, squeezed and wrung in order to extort from them all that they could be made to yield. Terrai, after again providing for the current expenses of the administration, thus succeeded, during the year, in diminishing the expenditures thirty-six millions, and increasing the receipts fifteen millions; and announced to the King that a saving of ten millions would be sufficient to restore the balance between them.[1]

The execution had been as energetic as the means had been dishonest. The greater part of these measures had been enacted under the form of decrees of the council: the least scandalous, presented to the parliament under the form of edicts and declarations, had been accepted by it with less difficulty than might have been expected. The parliament tolerated a bankruptcy represented as inevitable; the private interests of the magistrates were little affected by the spoliation of Terrai; their fortune consisting chiefly in lands and *rentes* on the Hôtel de Ville. This selfishness greatly lessened their moral energy. The court applauded the bold comptroller-general; but innumerable interests were trodden under foot, and ground down: law-suits, numerous bankruptcies, and suicides, increased the public discontent. The indignation, nevertheless, was not so great among the influential classes as it would be in the present state of society, wherein every thing reposes on respect for the pecuniary obligations of the State. Many employed their philosophy in consoling themselves, like Voltaire, for bankruptcy, by an epigram.

A great association, which had formerly had the whole fortune of France in its hands for a moment, consummated its ruin during the first year of Terrai's ministry. The Indian Company, the work of Colbert, revived with such brilliant promise by Law, and which had escaped the destruction of the *System*, had been, in general, more useful, indirectly, to foreign nations and the shipping of France, than profitable to its stockholders; but since the epoch when, conforming too much to a government as pusillanimous and more culpable than itself, it had rejected the power and incomparable greatness offered it by Dupleix, it had experienced disaster after disaster. After the recurrence of peace, an attempt was made to revive it. In 1764, the company ceded back to the King

[1] *Comptes rendus*, etc., *concernant les finances de France, depuis* 1758 *jusqu'en* 1787; Lausanne, 1788, in quarto.

Digitized by Google

the Isles of France and Bourbon, and the African factories; and the King restored to it the twelve thousand shares which belonged to the treasury, in consideration of some charges, and authorized it to administer its own affairs, without the interference of royal commissioners, and to make a call for funds on its stockholders. A Genevese banker, settled at Paris, who had honorably acquired a large fortune, and who was destined to play an important political part during the last years of the ancient régime and the first of the Revolution, M. Necker, had acquired the principal influence among the stockholders, and might have revived the commerce of the company by an enlightened and honest administration; but an intrigue plotted around the comptroller-general effected the withdrawal of the administrators elected, and the reëstablishment of the régime of commissioners (1768). The state of affairs seemed to justify the economists, who had long furiously assailed the monopoly of the company. Memorials for and against this monopoly were published in 1769 by M. Necker, and the Abbé Morellet, the representative of the sect of the economists. The ministry had decided on its course; for Morellet had been induced to write by the comptroller-general, D'Invau himself. A decree of the council, August 13, 1769, by the advice of commercial deputies, declared all trade with the Indies free: the return voyages, however, were still to be made to Lorient; a restriction which greatly diminished the advantages of free trade (September 6).

The company, involved in debt, did not attempt to struggle against the competition of free trade. It made a surrender of its property to the hands of the King, who undertook to satisfy the creditors, and to convert the shares into *rentes* at five per cent (April 8, 1770). The comptroller-general, in addition to this cession, which amounted in value to one hundred millions, still found means of extorting from the stockholders, by increasing their *rentes*, a last payment of fifteen millions; while, in reality, the State was indebted to them twenty millions.[1]

Thus ended the Indian Company of France; while the English East-India Company, its successful rival, was advancing with giant strides towards the conquest of all India, and was already in possession of the territories and revenues of a great empire. (It had, prior to 1772, besides the profits from commerce, a revenue of one hundred and twenty millions, of which the State claimed nearly fifty millions.) Other, more obscure operations agitated

[1] *Mém. de l'abbé Morellet*, t. I. ch. viii.; *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXVIII.; *Mém. de M. Necker pour la Compagnie des Indes.*

Digitized by Google

the people more than the ruin of the Indian Company, or even than the bankruptcy of the Abbé Terrai, — operations which were productive of much more terrible results. We shall speedily revert to the question of the cereals: it suffices at this moment to point out the striking contrast that existed between the ruin of so many private individuals, despoiled by the minister, and the distress of the people, caused by the dearness of grain, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the prodigious expenditure prescribed by the King for the journey and reception of the new Dauphiness. It is asserted, doubtless with exaggeration, that this expenditure exceeded twenty millions. Among the magnificence of these rejoicings, sinister presages seemed to announce the fate in reserve for the tragical union of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette. The fireworks displayed by the city of Paris in honor of the royal couple, May 30, on that Place Louis Quinze which was one day to be the Place de la Révolution, ended in a panic, in which the immense multitude, for whom sufficient means of egress had not been provided, were crushed and stifled. Several hundred persons perished.

A few weeks after this unhappy event, the parliament of Paris, lately so complaisant with respect to the finances, violently renewed its strife with the court on another ground. La Chalotais, the parliament of Rennes, and the States of Brittany, had not ceased to demand justice on D'Aiguillon since the King had withdrawn him from this province. The ex-governor, besides the grievances relative to his administration, was accused of having suborned witnesses in the trial of La Chalotais: the suspicion was even hinted of an attempt to poison the captive attorney-general, — a thing much more improbable than the other charges. D'Aiguillon himself entreated the King to permit him to be judged by the parliament and the peers. The Court of Peers was convoked at Versailles, presided over by the King in person (April 4, 1770), in order, said the Chancellor Maupeou, "to purge the peerage of the crimes of a peer, or a peer of the crimes which are imputed to him." This solemn suit continued to proceed regularly for nearly three months, with numerous revolutions; when Louis XV. abruptly decided it by a bed of justice, June 27. The King, considering, he said, that the incidents of the proceedings tended to subject to the inspection of the tribunals the secrecy of his administration, the execution of his orders, and the personal use of his authority, and convinced that the conduct of the Duke d'Aiguillon and of *those* named in the judicial

Digitized by Google

inquiries (La Chalotais and others) was irreproachable, annulled the proceedings, the reciprocal complaints, etc., and imposed the most absolute silence on all concerned.

It was impossible to be more inconsistent, or more disdainful of all judicial forms. There had been nothing in the incidents of the suit that might not have been foreseen; but the chancellor was only seeking a pretext for a great quarrel with the parliament. The parliament, in fact, indignantly received this arbitrary interference of individual authority in the course of justice, — an interference, moreover, which had had numerous precedents, and had secured impunity to many criminals under less striking circumstances, and on less important occasions. The parliament, by a decree of July 2, declared, contrary to the letters-patent of June 27, that the judicial inquiries contained the bases of grave proofs of several offences compromising the honor of the Duke d'Aiguillon, and that the duke should therefore abstain from exercising any functions belonging to the peerage until he had purged himself therefrom by due process of law. This was throwing down the gauntlet before royal absolutism.

The council quashed the decree of the parliament. After fruitless remonstrances, the parliament decreed anew that the suit could not be reputed terminated by an arbitrary act of absolute authority (July 31). August 14, the parliament of Rennes ordered two memorials and opinions in favor of the Duke d'Aiguillon to be burned by the public executioner, and refused to register the letters-patent which quashed a resolution passed by it against the members of the ex-*parliament of D'Aiguillon*. The King ordered two counsellors to be imprisoned, and the decrees of the council to be registered by force at Rennes. The parliament of Rennes protested, and sent to the other courts the judicial inquiries which it had instituted against D'Aiguillon and his abettors. The other courts sided with the parliaments of Paris and Rennes. M. de Calonne, who, from attorney-general to the commission instituted for the trial of La Chalotais, had become intendant of Metz, saw himself refused a seat by the parliament of Metz until he had cleared himself from the charges brought against him in the documents transmitted by the parliament of Rennes. The Governor of Metz, by order of the King, caused the resolution against Calonne to be stricken from the registers. Similar storms broke out at Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Besançon. September 1, the council quashed a decree of the parliament of Bordeaux, in which it was pretended, said the decree of the coun-

Digitized by Google

cil, "that his Majesty holds from a constitutive law the power which he holds from God alone."

September 3, the chancellor conducted the King to the Palais in order to hold a new bed of justice for the express purpose of causing the documents of the suit of D'Aiguillon to be returned to him, and every thing concerning the affair to be stricken from the registers. The King served as his own exempt and bailiff! September 6, the parliament of Paris adopted a resolution by which it declared that "the multiplicity of the acts of absolute power exercised in all directions against the letter and spirit of the constitutive laws of the monarchy is an unequivocal proof of a premeditated plan to change the form of government, and to substitute for the equable force of laws the irregular concussions of arbitrary power." The continuance of the deliberation was postponed till December 3, after the vacation.

This vacation, which was to be the last, was employed by the chancellor in preparing the engines for war, the plan of which he had long revolved in his mind.

November 27, a royal edict, renewing the declaration of March 3, 1766, again proscribed the terms *unity* and *classes*, interdicted all correspondence between the parliaments, all suspension of service, and all resistance after the King had replied to the remonstrances of the courts, under the penalty of deprivation of office. The parliament replied by calling to mind the fact that royalty owed to it the humiliation of the great vassals, the maintenance of the independence of the crown in opposition to the schemes of the court of Rome, and the preservation of the sceptre, from male to male, to the first-born of the royal house: it recriminated with extreme virulence against the baleful counsellors of the throne, and entreated the King to deliver up to the vengeance of the laws the disturbers of the State and the calumniators of the magistracy (December 3). December 7, the third bed of justice of the year was held. The King summoned the parliament to Versailles, and commanded it to register the edict of November 27, inveighing, meanwhile, against pretensions which would reduce the legislative power of the King to the simple proposition of the laws. The Duke d'Aiguillon went thither to take his seat among the peers, and arrogantly to brave his judges. December 10, the members of the parliament in a body offered the King the sacrifice of their condition and life, — a form of resignation. The King commanded them to resume their functions. They declared it impossible to obey until the withdrawal of the

Digitized by Google

edict. "It would seem," they wrote to the King, "as if nothing remained for your parliament to do but to perish with the laws, since it is the duty of the magistrates to follow the fate of the State" (December 13). The King sent letters of jussion. The parliament persisted in suspending the course of justice (December 19–20).

Situations apparently analogous had been witnessed more than once under this reign; but the question had never been entered into so thoroughly or in such terms. Every one felt that institutions were drifting to utter ruin. A grave event preceded the dénouement of the parliamentary struggle. Choiseul was no longer prime minister in fact, as he had been for a long time: Maupeou and Terrai had been withdrawing their ministry from his influence and undermining his policy for the past year. Choiseul desired peace within, and war without. Maupeou and Terrai desired the contrary; and both, secretly aspiring to the first place in the cabinet, acted in concert against the common enemy with Madame du Barri. Habit supported Choiseul with the King: the fear of war finally destroyed him. When Louis perceived how far his minister had involved him with Spain against England, he determined to sacrifice him. December 24, Choiseul received his dismissal by a harshly abrupt letter, which expressed the dissatisfaction of the King with his services, exiled him to his château at Chanteloup, and commanded him to retire thither within twenty-four hours.

A spectacle ensued such as had never before perhaps been seen, — the court faithful to disgrace! The greatest and most brilliant part of the court deserted Versailles to leave their names at Choiseul's door, then to escort the exile on the road to Chanteloup. The Duke de Chartres, the great-grandson of the Regent, forced his way into Choiseul's house to embrace the fallen minister. This was the first political act of the young prince who was destined to be *Philippe-Égalité*. The conduct of the court was a threatening symptom of the spirit of independence that was penetrating everywhere, at the very moment when royalty was preparing to seize with a faltering hand the most unlimited despotism. All the enlightened and lettered part of the nation testified the same sentiments as the court. It was felt that all of French honor that had remained to Versailles had departed with Choiseul.

The public mind was soon moved by new emotions. A month passed in letters of jussion, five times reiterated, summoning the parliament to resume the course of justice, and in incidents rela-

Digitized by Google

tive to the resistance of the magistrates. The King hesitated to strike the decisive blow. Madame du Barri succeeded where Maupeou would doubtless have failed. Well trained by the chancellor, she caused Vandyke's portrait of Charles I. to be placed in her apartment; and, showing it to Louis XV., "*France!*" said she (she gave the King of France the names of lackeys in farces),—"*France!* your parliament will also cut off your head!"

The parliament of Paris was not made for such terrible measures! It did not even think of placing itself under the protection of a sedition, as in the Fronde, and had not the least idea of *material* resistance.

During the night of January 19–20, 1771, all the members of the parliament were awakened by musketeers, who summoned them in the King's name to sign a declaration as to whether they would or would not resume their functions. The greater part signed in the negative. On the following night, the authors of the negative signatures, numbering more than one hundred and twenty, were enjoined, by *lettres de cachet*, to repair to different places of exile, with the notification of a decree of the council confiscating their places. The thirty-five or forty magistrates who had signed in the affirmative retracted, January 21. The public greeted them with loud acclamations on their departure from the Palais. They set out in turn for exile.

The members of the council of State were provisionally commissioned to render justice at the Palais (January 23), and were installed with great military parade amidst the hootings of the populace. The chief registrar, Gilbert des Voisins, sacrificed a post with a revenue of one hundred thousand francs, and suffered himself to be exiled, to keep his faith with the parliament: the other registrars yielded only before threats of imprisonment for themselves, and a declaration of the ineligibility of their children to any office. Despite similar menaces, the attorneys eluded the order to exercise their functions. It is needless to say that the advocates abstained from exercising theirs. The hussars themselves revealed their repulsion to the *counterfeit parliament*. The chancellor pursued his work, without caring for the passionate protests despatched by the provincial parliaments, the courts of aids, the chambers of accounts, the court of coinage, the Châtelet, and the whole magistracy. February 22, an edict began at last to reveal Maupeou's ideas. The preamble expressed itself in a language which the philosophers would not have disowned concerning the necessity of reforming the abuses of the courts; condemned the

Digitized by Google

vendibility of office "introduced by the misfortune of the times," which "often excluded from the magistracy those which were most worthy of it;" and acknowledged that the King owed his subjects prompt and gratuitous justice, and that the excessive extent of the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris was infinitely injurious to those amenable to it, who were obliged to abandon their families to go thither to solicit a justice rendered slow and ruinous by the length and multiplicity of the proceedings. In consequence, the King established in the towns of Arras, Blois, Châlons, Clermont-Ferrand, Lyons, and Poitiers, six *superior councils*, having cognizance in the last resort of all civil and criminal matters, with a few exceptions (in matters pertaining to the peerage, for instance), each in a certain number of bailiwicks. The members of these councils were to receive no term-fees, judges' fees, or other perquisites, over and above their salaries.

The ability of Maupeou's plan cannot be denied: to shelter despotism beneath the mask of progress, to assume the part of Frederick and Catharine, was something wholly new to Louis XV.

April 9, in consequence of an affront offered in a procession, by the chamber of accounts and the court of aids, to the *counterfeit parliament*, an edict abolished the court of aids, which had rendered itself obnoxious by its eloquent and continued remonstrances, dismembered its jurisdiction between the parliament of Paris and the new superior councils, and prescribed the redemption of its places. The principal members of the court were exiled from Paris. April 13, the King held a bed of justice, in which were registered, with the edict that abolished the court of aids, two other edicts, the first of which abolished all the former parliamentary offices, which were to be redeemed (the confiscation announced was retracted), and replaced them by seventy-five gratuitous posts, which were to be neither vendible nor hereditary,[1] and the holders of which were forbidden to receive judges' fees: the second edict abolished the great council, that parasitical tribunal, without fixed jurisdiction or attributes, which had had so many contests with the parliament. The members of the great council formed the new parliament, with a few ex-members of the court of aids and some obscure advocates, recommended by the Archbishop of Paris, or by other enemies of the old magistracy.[2]

[1] The new parliament was to present candidates to the King for the offices that should fall vacant.

[2] The first president of the *Maupeou parliament* was the intendant of Paris, Berthier de Sauvigni, whose son was destined to meet a tragic end in 1789, with his father-in-

Digitized by Google

The King, after forbidding all intercession in favor of the fallen parliament, retired, saying, with borrowed energy, "I shall never change!"

It was thus that the parliament of Paris went to rejoin its great enemy, the Society of Jesus. All the great bodies, all the fundamental elements of the past, were destroyed one after another by royalty, which remained alone suspended over the brink of ruin, in its apparent full power and its real weakness. The impression was deep and wide-spread, without being unanimous. Voltaire and a few of the encyclopedists, who had lately deplored with the public the ruin of Choiseul, hesitated, wavered, and finally applauded Maupeou reforming abuses, and expelling the judges of La Barre and Lally. But public opinion, for the first time, was not with Voltaire, but with Mabli, on this question. The words "liberty," "right," and "legality," from the midst of the judicial bodies, had deeply moved it. It despised the ministers too much to give them credit for their reforms.[1] The spirit of opposition made it forget at this moment the retrogressive tendencies, the faults, and even the crimes, of the parliaments, to remember only their long services in opposition to feudalism and ultramontanism, and the tie which had connected these great bodies for so many centuries with the destinies of the French nationality. Opposition was everywhere, around the throne, and on its very steps. The advocate-general, Séguier, had openly told the King, in the bed of justice, "that the inverting of the laws had more than once been the cause or pretext for revolutions in the greatest monarchies." Of twenty-nine peers present, eleven had given their opinion against the registration of the edicts; and, which seemed more serious, all the princes of the blood, except the Count de La Marche, the son of the Prince de Conti, had refrained from appearing at the bed of justice, and had addressed to the King a warm protest, in which they argued the illegality of all that had been done since the preceding November, maintained that the inviolability of the magistrates was numbered among the fundamental laws of the monarchy, and explicitly denied to the King

law Foulon, the intendant of finance under Terrai. — See *Journal historique de la révolution opérée dans la constitution de la monarchie française, par M. de Maupeou*; 7 volumes.

[1] A regulation, issued May 17, simplified legal proceedings by applying the form of procedure of the council of State to the new tribunals, with the necessary modifications.

Digitized by Google

the right of enacting such a law as that of November 27.[1] The King exiled the princes to their estates.

The public prosecutor and his officers had resigned their posts, and ten of the ex-members of the great council had refused to sit in the *Maupeou parliament*. The greater part of the bailiwicks and presidials refused to recognize the new magistracy. The Châtelet of Paris, the first of the inferior tribunals, suffered itself to be crushed rather than yield (May 27). Among the magistrates of the Châtelet, sent into exile, is observed the name of D'Éprémesnil, advocate of the King. The provincial parliaments loudly defied the destroyers of the Parisian magistracy, who were about to destroy them in turn. The parliament of Rouen, among others, had declared the magistrates, advocates, etc., "who were interfering with the functions of the parliament of Paris," *illegally chosen and perjured* (April 15), and had entreated the King to convoke the States-General. There were no material disturbances: the streets were tranquil; but the public mind was in a state of fermentation. *News by private hand* braved the police, and circulated the details of the turpitude of Versailles everywhere; and terrible placards, the work, not of factions or conspiracies, which did not yet exist, but of individual anger, appeared from time to time in the public squares. The following words were one day read at the foot of the statue of Louis XV.: *Decree of the court of coinage, prescribing that a Louis badly struck shall be struck anew.*

The ministry pursued its work. All the judicial courts that resisted were crushed, — the *table de marbre*, which judged in the last resort whatever concerned the waters and forests, the bureau of finance, the general bench of the admiralty, etc.

From August to November, 1771, all the provincial parliaments, and several chambers of accounts, courts of aids, etc., were dissolved, and reorganized on the new footing. Not only the upper bourgeoisie, but also the nobility, the usual adversaries of the members of the bar, showed themselves, in general, sympathetic towards the misfortunes of the magistracy, either because they were carried away by the general sentiment of hostility to the circle of the King, or because they foresaw, in the fall of so ancient and so important an institution, the imminent peril of all the

[1] The protest was signed by the Duke of Orleans, his son the Duke de Chartres, the Prince de Condé, his son the Duke de Bourbon, the Count de Clermont, and the Prince de Conti. The King called the last *my cousin, the advocate*, on account of his parliamentary relations and opinions.

Digitized by Google

ancient régime. Two provincial governors resigned their posts rather than aid in the destruction of the parliaments of Toulouse and Rouen. The higher clergy alone short-sightedly rejoiced at the blow which avenged the Jesuits.

The Abbé Terrai's hands were free, since he had no longer to fear a refusal of registration. The economy which he had solicited not having been effected, he raised the imposts, villain-taxes, twentieths, salt-taxes,[1] and gratuities, and rendered justice much more costly than it had been when it was not *gratuitous*, by enormously increasing the duties on records, registers, etc. He created new taxes and a multitude of petty posts, abolished other offices, and subverted the municipal ordinances of 1764, establishing the vendibility with respect to municipal posts which had just been abolished with respect to the courts of law. Like a true financier of the Middle Ages, he doubled, in behalf of the treasury, not only the tolls which belonged to the King, but those also which belonged to the nobles. He revoked all the alienations of the domains and of various duties, some without any reimbursements to the alienees, others by ordering the treasury to pay a trifling annuity on them. He caused all offices to be arbitrarily valued, and taxed the holders one per cent a year on the capital, besides the deductions which were made from all salaries and annuities;[2] abolished all the exemptions from duties, aids, salt-taxes, import and export duties, and franc-fiefs, without any indemnity to the towns and private individuals who had purchased them; procured fifty millions by the issue of life-*rentes* at ten per cent; and succeeded, by innumerable financial operations, in increasing the receipts thirty-four millions, and redeeming a great part of the paper, the payment of which had been suspended, so as to set up the financiers anew, of whom he was in need. He boasted of having secured a balance of five millions in favor of the receipts for 1773; but it is certain, that, in his own estimate for 1774, the deficit, which he partially admits, is found to amount to more than forty millions (he admits it to be more than twenty-seven millions). He had demanded economy of the court: it had answered by a new increase of expenditure.[3]

[1] At the time of the overthrow of the parliaments, the administration had prepared a plan for the equalization of the tax on salt. Terrai renounced it, and simply increased the salt-tax one-fifth.

[2] Terrai fixed this deduction at one-tenth on life-*rentes* and salaries, one-fifth on interest on security and the profits of the farmers-general, and one-fifteenth on perpetual *rentes*.

[3] Seven million from the civil household of the King and the appanage of the Count d'Artois, etc.

Digitized by Google

It may well be supposed that true order was incompatible with such immorality. Terrai had already diverted to other uses a part of his new sinking-fund, after having destroyed the old one. He had renewed the lease of the general farms at one hundred and thirty-five millions. The agreements made, he informed the farmers that their places were encumbered with *croupes* (preferred shares), and pensions amounting to two millions. The farmers protested: he threatened not to return to them the funds already advanced. They were forced to dispense with the two millions. This incident, among a hundred others, indicates the true character of this cut-throat ministry.

Terrai purchased by all imaginable exactions and malversations the support of the *Du Barri party*. Madame de Pompadour at least had had an individuality and a will; but the Du Barri's name was legion: there were no bounds to the avidity of the swarm of harpies that surrounded this easy and fantastic courtesan. A last shadow of control remained to the chamber of accounts, the only one of the great courts which had been spared, and which had abandoned or tamely supported the common cause of the magistracy. The chamber of accounts endeavored to raise itself in public opinion by remonstrances against the financial abuses. Terrai rid himself of this weak obstacle: he took away from the chamber of accounts the cognizance of the validity of the documents which authenticated the disbursements made in the King's name by the keepers of the treasury, the general treasurers of the clergy, and those of the *pays d'États*, then the cognizance of the accounts of the receivers of the villain-taxes (May, 1772). All accountability was thus swallowed up in the obscure gulf of the *royal orders on the treasury*.[1]

This absolute despotism which enveloped France is appalling, considered at a distance: near by, it was almost as ridiculous as detestable. All opposition manifested in acts was punished by *lettres de cachet;* but these *lettres de cachet*, which imprisoned, or despatched from one end of the kingdom to the other, a multitude of notable persons snatched from their families and business, were revoked as lightly as they were issued. The comptroller-general was the first to laugh at the witticisms that were current concerning his depredations: he was willing to be accused of being a plunderer so long as he was not reproached with being a

[1] Concerning the exactions of Terrai, see Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. pp. 184–188; and the *Mémoires concernant l'administration des finances sous Terrai;* London, 1776, *passim*.

Digitized by Google

fool.[1] This feeble and vinous despotism lacked earnestness and nerve to become true tyranny, — not that Maupeou and Terrai were wanting in personal energy; but, above and beneath them, all was flagging, and becoming enfeebled in victory itself. The opposite side was also flagging. The members of the parliaments of Grenoble and Dijon had requested to return to the new organization. A great part of the members of the parliament of Douai, and minorities of from one-fourth to one-third of those of the parliaments of Besançon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Rennes, and Metz, made the same submission. The parliaments of Paris and Rouen remained unanimous in abstaining from the exercise of their functions; but a part of their members finally consented to accept the redemption of their places, which, in some sort, recognized the lawfulness of the new régime. The majority of the advocates at Paris decided to be sworn at the reopening of the November term, 1771.[2] The Provincial Estates, even in Brittany, gave way before a threat of dissolution. A great number of Norman gentlemen, who had signed a protest against the violation of the ancient Norman charter, threatened with exile or imprisonment, retracted individually.

The Condés, then the Orleans, weary of living at a distance from court, and whose interests were injured by the fiscal measures, entreated to be taken again into favor. They were far different from the princes of the League and even of the Fronde! Conti alone sustained his part to the end (Clermont had died in June, 1771). These numerous defections did not render the attitude of the public less hostile. Paris was sullen. Brittany above all was so gloomy, that it seemed as if something terrible must speedily grow out of its silence and impassibility. Pamphlets, eagerly welcomed, multiplied against the King. It was evident, that, though every thing was suspended, nothing was ended.

However great might have been the agitation caused by the fall of Choiseul and the parliaments, this excitement affected little beyond the upper strata of society; but sullen murmurs, far more threatening, and provoked by a different cause, were

[1] A plunderer in behalf of the King: his large private fortune, and the enormous direct or tolerated profits of his ministry, give us reason to believe that he did not pillage on his own account.

[2] The office of parliamentary attorney had been abolished, and a hundred offices of advocates, performing the functions of attorneys, had been created, the purchasers of which were exempted from the necessity of holding university degrees.

Digitized by Google

rising from the masses of the people. Maupeou had no part in these; but Terrai was deeply involved in them, and, with him, the King in person!

We must go back a little way in order to take up the formidable question of the cereals.

The edict of 1764, in favor of the free exportation, so ardently desired by the economists and the greater part of the parliaments, had at first borne good fruits. The abundant harvests, which perhaps had saved France in the last part of the Seven-Years' War, had been repeated in 1765 and 1766; and the interest of the producers and the consumers had been reconciled by an average price: but, from 1767, the state of affairs became very different. Bad harvests produced dearness. The people laid the blame on the exportation, which had not, however, exceeded the annual value of fifteen million francs in 1765 and 1766, and had since diminished,[1] — a quantity very trifling in proportion to the consumption of France; while the dearness far surpassed any deficit that could have been caused by the exportation, which, moreover, save in rare instances,[2] ceased of itself as soon as the grain rose in price. Serious disturbances agitated Normandy in the beginning of 1768, and the people clamored against the monopolizers. The cry of famine often accuses men where it should only accuse things: this time, however, the people were not wholly in the wrong. As early as May 5, 1768, the parliament of Rouen entreated the King to suspend that freedom of exportation which it had lately entreated with such urgency.[3] The parliament was not listened to. Numerous agents having bought the grain in the granary, although the edicts interdicting its sale elsewhere than in the markets had not been revoked, manœuvred to prevent the farmers from sending their grain to the markets, and caused quantities of grain to be sent out of Normandy; while the ministerial power forbade the chamber of commerce of Rouen to counterbalance these operations by purchasing grain outside the province. The parliament of Rouen had begun to prosecute the monopolizers. An express order from the King arrested the prosecution. The parliament of Rouen gave vent to its indignation in a letter to the King full of the boldest accusations. "The most

[1] *Mémoires de Choiseul*, t. I. p. 73.

[2] For instance, when grain, dear at home, was still dearer abroad.

[3] Meanwhile, the parliament of Dauphiny, a province which the dearth had not yet reached, on the contrary, solicited of the King indefinite freedom of the grain-trade, without limits or duties, and boasted of the progress which had been made in agriculture since the edict of 1764 (April, 1768).

Digitized by Google

considerable purchases of grain have been made at the same time, by the same parties, in the different European markets. It would be impossible for private individuals to carry on such immense enterprises. There is but one society, the members of which are powerful in credit, that would be capable of such an undertaking: we recognize therein the handiwork of the ruling power, the footprints of authority. . . . The trading speculators have not acted rashly: the purchases of grain in the granary have been made, under the shadow of authority, by men who brave all prohibitions. We have the proof of this in our hands. . . . The prohibition to prosecute manifests the existence of criminals, the fear that they may be discovered, and the desire to screen them from punishment. *This prohibition from the throne transforms our doubts into certainty!*" (October 29, 1768.)

The minister of the King's household, Bertin, the confidential agent of all the private business of Louis XV., replied to the parliament of Rouen, that "its reflections were only conjectures, and conjectures little in conformity with the respect due the King; and that the parliament had received them without proofs, and had not inquired into the facts!" The parliament of Rouen addressed its reply to the King himself. "When we affirmed that this monopoly existed, and that it was protected, God forbid, sire, that we should have had your Majesty in view, but perchance some of those among whom you distribute your authority."

The successor of Louis the Great had come to the point of defending himself, and defending himself badly, against the charge of being a grain monopolizer! . . . This inconceivable dialogue positively attests the existence of what has been styled the PACT OF FAMINE.[1]

What was the Pact of Famine, that bloody spectre so often evoked, like the demon of vengeance, in the most funereal days of the Revolution?

We will not go back to the inhuman speculations which had taken place in former times, and to which allusion is made in divers passages of Saint-Simon, and even in a sermon of Massillon; neither will we investigate the abuses to which the *leases of the King's grain*, that is, the contracts made with the government for the supply of the capital and the armies about 1729 and 1740, had given rise. The celebrated Malisset Company, organized

[1] We have taken these important details from the extended work of M. Floquet, so full of useful and curious documents, — *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VII. pp. 421–432.

Digitized by Google

from 1765 to 1767, is alone in question here. It is probable that the first idea of the administration, that is, of the Comptroller-General Laverdi, Trudaine de Montigni (the son of the friend of Gournai), and other intendants of finance, was only, while securing the provisioning of Paris, to establish a certain standard in the price of grain by the operations of an association which would buy grain in good years, and store it, in order to sell it again in bad ones. The end was not only allowable, but praiseworthy. This was doubtless what Louis XV. did not fail to say when he interested himself in behalf of his privy purse in the affairs of the association.[1] He colored his base cupidity in his own eyes by persuading himself that he was rendering a service to agriculture. The end was praiseworthy, we say. The means was dangerous. It would have been dangerous even in a time of liberty and publicity. At an epoch when the most oppressive and most iniquitous speculations had become a habit with the revenue-farmers; when the ministry screened the financial operations, and facilitated every kind of abuse; when the men in power had *lettres de cachet* at their disposal to punish indiscretions and repress complaints, — an association supported by the government could be little else than an engine of monopoly for the purpose of stifling that competition in the grain-trade demanded by the economists. It was necessary to disguise the hand of the government, and to disguise the very existence of the association. Men concealed their action on account of prejudices. These prejudices were justified. The association was scarcely organized when criminal manœuvres were commenced to exaggerate the rise. An ex-secretary of the order of the clergy, Le Prévost de Beaumont, having become acquainted with the constitutive agreement of the Malisset Company, made it his duty to communicate it to the parliament of Rouen, which had substantiated the results without being able to trace the cause. The documents were seized before reaching the parliament of Rouen, and Le Prévost *disappeared!* He was discovered twenty-two years after in the depths of a State-prison! The 14*th of July* was needed to restore him to liberty.

The administration, at first rather a dupe than an accomplice,

[1] This purse was administered by Bertin. Before speculating in grain, Louis had speculated largely in the public stocks. He always held all kinds of paper; and, when any edict discrediting such or such a kind was prepared in the council, he did not sign it until he had anticipated the decline by ridding himself of the threatened stock; that is, he played *a sure game.* — *Vie privée de Louis XV.*, t. IV. p. 152.

Digitized by Google

became alarmed on seeing dearness become dearth. Assistance was despatched to Normandy: premiums were offered for the importation of grain, and the ships importing it were exempted from freight duties (October 31, 1768). The parliament of Paris, meanwhile, became restless in turn. A general assembly of police of the city of Paris, convoked by the parliament, and composed of deputies from all the courts and communes, decreed that the parliament should be requested to entreat the King to retract the declarations of 1763 and 1764, to permit no more grain to be purchased outside of the markets, to compel those who had storehouses to send their grain to market, and to suspend exportation for a year (November 28, 1768). The parliament rendered a corresponding decree, which was quashed by the council. The ministry wished to maintain the principles of commercial freedom.[1]

The anti-economist revolution, meanwhile, broke forth with an impetuosity wholly national. It had passed from the people to the parliaments: it reached the philosophers themselves, to a certain point, precisely at the moment when the economists were obtaining the most flattering successes abroad among the foreign disciples of French philosophy.[2] The hierophantic tone affected by the principal disciples of Quesnai, their pretensions to infallibility, the *evidence* imputed by them to certain very questionable principles, and the too often obscure, pedantic, and diffuse form of their aphorisms (Turgot always excepted), had shocked the writers of the *Encyclopædia*, and, before them, the patriarch of Ferney. Voltaire had satirized the economists, although without bitterness, in his *Man with Forty Crowns*, and elsewhere; and was the commander-in-chief of that rising in arms in favor of the traditions of Colbert, in which the unfortunate champion of the Indian Company, the banker Necker, distinguished himself.[3] Rousseau

[1] Among the measures dictated by principles of sound economy must be cited the abolition of the right of common pasturage in Champagne (March, 1769).

[2] In 1769, a chair of *public economy* was founded at Milan for Beccaria, under the auspices of Count Firmian, the Governor of Milanais. A similar chair was established at Naples by the minister Tanucci.

[3] Necker won the prize, in 1773, offered by the Academy of Dijon for a Eulogy of Colbert. The article *Population*, in Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*, is worthy of mention in this discussion against the economists. In this, Voltaire admirably refutes Montesquieu and the economists concerning the pretended depopulation of modern Europe; and, which is still more remarkable, refutes Malthus in advance: "We do not progress in a geometrical proportion. All the calculations that have been based on this pretended multiplication are absurd chimeras. Nature has provided means for preserving and restricting the species." The species, yes; but greatly at the expense of individuals. The question is obscure, and full of anxiety to

Digitized by Google

abstained from the strife, despite the efforts of the Marquis de Mirabeau to draw him into the camp of the economists. Rousseau asked nothing but peace and silence: *rational despotism*, moreover, was not calculated to attract him. The patriot Forbonnais, without being the enemy of industrial and commercial freedom, had criticised in a practical point of view, in his *Economic Observations*, the cosmopolitan theorists who appeared to him endangering the existence of the marine and the colonies. Mabli attacked them more thoroughly than Voltaire and Forbonnais had done: he opposed to the *natural right of property*, according to the economists, his own hypothesis on primitive communism, and to their *rational despotism* the political principles which he held in common with Rousseau and Montesquieu. On the second point, it may be said that his victory was complete.[1] But, of all the blows aimed at the economists, the most resonant, both by its vigor and because it bore on the vital question of the moment, was from the hand of a new-comer, a foreigner, the Abbé Galiani, a Gallicized Italian, who had long charmed the philosophic drawing-rooms of Paris by the mad Neapolitan sallies in which his bold and impressive genius clothed itself. "His was the head of a Machiavel on the body of a buffoon," says an eloquent writer of him.[2] *The Dialogues on the Grain-trade* (the end of 1769), the piquant work of a brilliant wit and a subtle dialectician,[3] did not oppose theory to theory, as Mabli had done. Galiani rejected all absolute theory, and maintained that the phenomena of the economic existence of nations, and of their international relations, are so complicated that it is impossible to govern them by a single principle; that the merchandise which is the very life of nations, grain, is different from all other kinds of merchandise; that all the internal obstacles to traffic throughout the kingdom should be destroyed before opening the frontiers, as the first of all commerce to a nation is that which it carries on with itself; that it would be insane in governments to permit things to drift of themselves, trusting that they will always find their *natural level*, as the people may die of famine in the interval. He asserted that it was impossible to proceed in this manner by isolated measures, and that

the species which has self-consciousness and responsibility for itself, — the human species.

[1] *Doutes sur l'Ordre naturel des Sociétés politiques*, 1768. This is perhaps the best of Mabli's works.

[2] Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*, t. I. p. 545.

[3] Diderot retouched them, but only for the purpose of correction: the fire was already there.

Digitized by Google

nothing should be touched unless every thing could be reorganized. He concluded, not by the prohibition of exportation, but by the establishment of a duty upon it, to be employed in the redemption of the tolls, stall and market duties and corn-dues, which fettered internal commerce,[1] and its restriction to the nations which granted reciprocity. One of these *Dialogues* contained a passage, the sagacity of which was soon to receive a terrible verification, on the *feigned exportation* of grain. "The exportation will be only apparent: the monopolizers will transport it beyond the frontiers, either to some petty sovereignty enclosed within the kingdom, or to the frontier towns, without selling it. . . . They will starve the province, and cause the disappearance of grain; then, when an exorbitant price has been attained, they will bring it in as if from the most remote countries. . . . The islands of Jersey and Guernsey will be the furtive entrepôt of the grain of Brittany, as will other countries of that of other provinces."[2]

The year 1769 had not been more fortunate than 1768: 1770 began in the same manner. The sedition increased in the different provinces. The government appeared to yield to the public clamor. Already Terrai had prevented the publication of the Abbé Morellet's answer to Galiani, — an answer suggested by Choiseul, who protected free exportation without regarding it as a panacea, like the economists. It was Choiseul's first check at home. Turgot, who, in his intendancy of Limoges and Angoulême, nobly showed that economic freedom did not imply in his eyes the inertia of authority or the denial of social duties,[3] — Turgot, who would not believe in *monopoly*, vainly strove to persuade the comptroller-general to maintain the free grain-trade, while encouraging the formation of private entrepôts. A decree of the council, July 14, 1770, temporarily suspended exportation.

The people gained nothing thereby. The dearness continued, and it was clearly seen that exportation was not the true cause of

[1] The objection of Galiani was well founded: all these duties, joined to the old police of grain, which had not been abolished, rendered the edicts which granted the free exportation of grain well-nigh illusory.

[2] *Dialogues sur le commerce des blés*, ap. *Mélanges d'économie politique*, t. II. p. 164; Guillaumin, 1848.

[3] In conformity with a decree of the parliament of Bordeaux, he had enjoined on men in easy circumstances to unite for the purpose of providing for the subsistence of the poor during the dearth; obliged the land-owners to support those who had leased their farms on shares until the next harvest; caused grain to be purchased abroad; organized work-shops for the poor, and set the example by great personal sacrifices, although he was not rich.

Digitized by Google

the evil. Was it, then, the monopolization at home? — the monopolies exercised or protected by the agents of the government? The people no longer doubted it, and the parliaments thought like the people. The parliament of Paris again rendered several more decrees against the monopolizers before its abolition; and in January, 1771, on the eve of its destruction, it deliberated anew on the *grain question*. The economists explained the dearness by the general panic which decupled the effect of the real insufficiency of the harvests, while foreign importation did not come to arrest the suffering: for England, as unfortunate as we, had suspended her usual exportation of grain; Turkey, on account of the war, had done the same; and Poland was devastated and ruined. All this was very true; but it was not the whole truth. Terrai had suspended free exportation only to replace it by a completely arbitrary system,[1] and to turn the grain question to the advantage of the finances at his ease, as Choiseul says in his Memoirs. The Malisset Association, of which the King was the principal partner, had its hands free after the destruction of the parliaments, and did exactly what Galiani had predicted. Terrai, for instance, forbade exportation in Languedoc, when the crops became better there, in order to secure the purchase of the grain at a low price by his agents:[2] meanwhile, he opened the ports of Brittany, and procured from that province quantities of grain, which he sent to Jersey to be stored for the purpose of bringing it back when the price was artificially raised to its height. The headquarters of the monopoly was at the royal mills and storehouses at Corbeil; but the impulse came from Versailles, and the courtiers admitted to the private office of the King could not help casting down their eyes when they saw memorandum-books on his secretary, in which was inscribed from day to day the price of grain in the different markets of the kingdom. It was in this manner that Louis XV. interpreted the lessons of Quesnai! The shamelessness became such that the editor of the *Royal Almanac* for 1774 placed among the officers of finance a Sieur Mirlavaud, the *treasurer of his Majesty's grain transactions*. The revision came too late: the edition was already issued when it was sought to stop it. The ministers, meanwhile, strove to divert the popular rancor by calumniously accusing the parliaments of having caused the dearth by their

[1] He had nominally maintained free transit at home, but paralyzed it in fact by the regulations of December, 1770, and January, 1771.

[2] The new parliament of Toulouse, although manufactured by Maupeou, rendered a decree in 1772 in favor of free exportation, which was quashed by the council.

Digitized by Google

patronage of exportation, and even by monopolies. The people believed both ministers and parliaments against each other. The too real evil of speculation grew to fantastic proportions in the imagination of the multitude. The suffering classes became accustomed to consider the higher classes, courtiers, magistrates, and financiers, as a legion of vampires leagued to suck the blood of the poor; and implacable hatreds, revived from time to time by new incidents, lurked in the hearts of the masses till the days of the social cataclysm, when they overflowed like a raging torrent. At the bottom of all the popular excesses of the Revolution, on looking closely, may be perceived the wan and fleshless spectre of the *Pact of Famine*.[1]

We have seen Maupeou and Terrai at work. A third personage completed the ministerial triumvirate which had replaced Choiseul, — a triumvirate very imperfectly united; for Maupeou had used all his efforts to set aside the new-comer, who was no other than the Duke d'Aiguillon. D'Aiguillon had not finally attained his aim, the ministry of foreign affairs, until June, 1771; and, even then, it was owing to his intimacy with Madame du Barri. This ministry had remained for some months vacant: as to that of war and of the marine, they had been filled by obscure mediocrities, the very name of whom is unimportant to history: this shadowed forth the part that would be played abroad by the administration which succeeded Choiseul.

When D'Aiguillon entered the ministry, the chances of war with England had already disappeared. Spain, no longer hoping to be supported by France, had rendered satisfaction to England by restoring to her the post wrested from her in the Falkland Islands. By way of compensation, the great affair of Poland was hastening to the catastrophe prepared by the Machiavellian genius of Frederick. The King of Prussia was unwilling to join his arms with those of Austria for the purpose of defending Turkey against the Russians, and Austria had been unwilling to join France in defending Poland against Catharine and Frederick. The partition of Poland was the only expedient that could prevent the dismemberment of Turkey, and reconcile the three formidable neighbors. Frederick had made a new attempt with the Czarina during the winter of 1770–1771: he had despatched his brother Prince Henry, who had at length obtained from her

[1] See, in the *Moniteur* of 1789, the memorial in which the Constitution of the Malisset Association is found. This is the manifesto of the popular hatred: all the facts are true, but interpreted by the inflamed passions of the epoch.

Digitized by Google

a contingent consent to the partition, but given with ill grace, and by no means definitive. Catharine would have greatly preferred the Turkish provinces to a shred of that Poland, which, in reality, she held almost entire.[1] Austria was determined, on her part, to prevent the cession of the Danubian provinces to Russia. Maria Theresa, by a treaty of July 6, 1771, a treaty which was concealed from France, promised the Sultan to procure the restitution to him of the Russian conquests, and not to permit any attack on the independence of Poland. The last clause of the treaty was violated in advance!

Catharine, meanwhile, still hoped to regain the court of Vienna by giving it a share in Turkey, and in this manner avoid the necessity of yielding to Frederick. She insinuated to Vienna that France might be admitted into the mediation with respect to Poland. Maria Theresa, who was still somewhat repugnant to the partition desired by her son, accepted this overture. Kaunitz was forced to impart it to the cabinet of Versailles. The fall of Choiseul, the personal enemy of Catharine, would have facilitated the negotiation. D'Aiguillon turned a deaf ear to it. He did more: thinking to substitute the Prussian for the Austrian alliance, he revealed the secret advances of Austria and Russia to Frederick, and told the envoy of the King of Prussia that France cared little as to what transpired in Poland, and would not move on that account, — this at the same time that he promised the agent of the confederates of Bar, Wielhorski, the continuance of assistance from France, and in fact, in obedience to the King, ordered Viomesnil to set out for Poland to replace Dumouriez, who had quarrelled with the confederates in consequence of an unsuccessful encounter with the Russians.[2]

Frederick hastened to inform Vienna of the duplicity of the ministry of Louis XV.; and nothing remained for Austria but to enter into definitive arrangements with Prussia, as Joseph II. and Kaunitz desired. Moreover, the combination between Russia, Austria, and France, would have certainly failed; for Maria

[1] There is not a word of truth in all that Frederick and his brother have narrated concerning the journey of Prince Henry. Frederick, in the writings of his later years, undertook to deceive posterity, and to make history a great imposture, by throwing upon his accomplices the origination of the political crime which he had so long and ably planned in advance.

[2] This repulse was due at least as much to the indifference, or, to speak more truly, the treachery, of the cabinet of Versailles, as to the lack of discipline of the Poles. A levy of Saxon foot and some convoys of arms, which Dumouriez had prepared, were wilfully held back. — See *Mém. de Dumouriez*, t. I. ch. viii.

Digitized by Google

Theresa, who might have consented to an extension of Russian territory on the side of the Caucasus, would never have conceded the provinces of the Lower Danube, and Catharine would never have renounced these provinces without a compensation in Poland.

During the interval, the confederates, who, the year before, had declared Poniatowski degraded from the throne, sought to seize his person. On the evening of November 3, one of their parties attacked the King of Poland, wounded him, and took him prisoner in the very streets of Warsaw. Poniatowski escaped only through the repentance of one of the conspirators. There was a burst of indignation against these *fanatics*, who, it was said, had sworn the death of *their King* at the feet of a Madonna. Voltaire did not spare them. Frederick took this *regicide* as a pretext for occupying, and subjecting to ransom, the greater part of Great Poland. The exploits of the confederates, and of a few Frenchmen who fought in their ranks, did not compensate for the bad effects of this incident. At the beginning of 1772, the Franco-Poles surprised Cracow. A French officer, Choisi, shut himself up in the citadel, and defended it heroically against the Russians; but the commander-in-chief, Viomesnil, was unable to succor it from without, and the garrison was compelled to surrender, April 15. The French prisoners, sent to Russia, were abandoned by their government; and Voltaire and D'Alembert vainly solicited their liberty from Catharine.

The dismemberment of Poland was consummated meanwhile. Catharine having finally decided to renounce the Danubian provinces, no more obstacles remained to the projects of Frederick. February 17, 1772, a secret agreement was signed at St. Petersburg between Russia and Prussia. Their respective shares were assigned to the two allies; and it was agreed to offer Austria hers, and to unite against her if she opposed the partition. This threat was a weapon offered to Joseph II. and Kaunitz for the purpose of conquering the scruples of Maria Theresa. Austria suffered violence to be done her with a very good grace; for she acceded in principle to the partition of March 4, reserving the right of regulating the conditions. Maria Theresa afterwards pretended that she had only assented to the partition with the hope of discouraging her copartners by the exorbitance of her demands, and was grieved, she said, to see the King of Prussia and the Czarina fully grant her claims.[1] The sincerity of this story is very suspicious:

[1] Correspondence of the French Ambassador, Breteuil, in Flassan, t. VII. p. 124.

Digitized by Google

for the demands, *very exorbitant*, in fact, of the Empress-Queen, were long disputed, and obstinately maintained; and the definitive treaty was not signed, August 5, until after Austria had somewhat moderated her pretensions.

When the cabinet of Versailles attempted to manifest its surprise at what it had full leisure to foresee, and to complain of the ally that had deceived it, Kaunitz replied to D'Aiguillon by arrogant recriminations, in which, nevertheless, there was one true sentence: "You would not have sustained us!" Only Austria did not wish *to be sustained:* Choiseul had put her to the test.[1]

The confederates were overpowered and dispersed; and all Poland was invaded, and crushed by the arms of the three powers, when the treaty of partition was made known at Warsaw, September 2, 1772. To the Czarina were assigned three thousand square leagues and one million five hundred thousand souls in Lithuania and Polish Livonia; to the King of Prussia, Polish Prussia, comprising nine hundred square leagues and eight hundred and sixty thousand souls; and to Austria, twenty-five hundred square leagues and two million five hundred thousand souls in Red Russia, and the Polish palatinates on the left of the Vistula. Austria was resolved at least that the crime should be lucrative. The principal author of the partition had been the most modest: he had renounced Dantzic, which Russia, at the instigation of England, had refused him. Frederick was quite sure that Prussia, master of the Lower Vistula, would have Dantzic and Posnania sooner or later. The imaginary pretexts which were alleged, and the pretended *rights* which were claimed by the cabinets over the usurped territories, were even more odious than the shameless acknowledgment of the right of force had been. The simulacrum of a diet, convoked in April, 1773, ratified under the bayonet, by a majority of two votes, the mutilation of the Polish republic.[2]

Thus commenced that murder of a great people, which opened to old Europe the era of subversion and destruction, — the sombre era, in which the modern idea of right had not yet succeeded the ancient idea of right, annihilated. Voltaire and the encyclopedists, blinded by their anti-Polish prejudices and by the cosmopolitanism which obscured the idea of nationality in their minds, did not comprehend this, applauded it, or were silent. Rousseau had comprehended it! He saw clearly that something more was

[1] Saint-Priest, *Partage de la Pologne*, § v.

[2] Catharine and Frederick, the partition consummated, wholly forgot the cause of the Dissidents, so long their pretext.

Digitized by Google

in question than a victory over fanaticism and serfdom. Of the three authors of the great crime, the first, Catharine, lightly bore the weight in her hand red with the blood of two Czars; the second, Frederick, too withered in heart to repent, but too enlightened not to foresee the judgment of posterity, endeavored to lessen the chief responsibility which was destined to rest upon his memory; the third, Maria Theresa, more than once suffered the confession of her remorse to escape her. "Count von Barck," she said one day to the Swedish ambassador, "the affair of Poland drives me to despair. . . . It is a blot on my reign!"—"Sovereigns," replied the embarrassed minister, "are accountable to God alone."—"It is this also that I fear."[1]

Mutilated Poland was destined to drag out its mournful existence a score of years longer, vainly striving to reform and reorganize itself under the pitiless hand of its oppressors.[2] This noble nation perished, the victim of an unrealizable ideal, — the law of unanimity, absolute individual sovereignty, — as much as of a culpable contradiction between the ideal and the real, the liberty of the few and the serfdom of the many. If it rises again, it will be, however, only to resume this ideal within the bounds of possibility. If Poland does not represent liberty and individuality in that Slavic world which is a prey to despotism, there is no reason for her regeneration.

After the notification of the partition, Louis XV. seemed to awaken for a moment. He had a weak desire to avenge Poland,

[1] Saint-Priest, § 5. Maria Theresa was one of those complex characters, with little openness and simplicity, in which decorum holds the first place, and which lack sincerity towards others and themselves, without being really hypocritical: the cry of the heart sometimes escapes them.

[2] It attempted too late to profit by the counsels which it had asked of Rousseau and Mabli. The work of Mabli had been written as early as 1770; that of Rousseau, not until 1772. Mabli, making his maxims bend to what he regarded as a necessity in Poland, pronounced himself in favor of hereditary royalty. Rousseau opposed it; but he desired the abolition of the *liberum veto*, and proposed a plan of national education, and an extremely wise and practical plan for the admission of towns to political rights, and for the gradual emancipation of the serfs, who were to be initiated, first into individual liberty, next into municipal liberty, then into national liberty. "It is necessary to begin by rendering them worthy of liberty, — to free their souls before freeing their bodies. Polish nobles, never flatter yourselves with being free while you hold your brethren in chains." He advised, instead of a regular army, an organization analogous to that of the Helvetic militia and the present *landwehrs* of Germany. He consoled Poland in advance for the partition about to be effected by asserting that a partial dismemberment of this vast and weak body might be the cause of its salvation. "Poles," he exclaims, "you cannot prevent your neighbors from swallowing you: render it at least impossible for them to digest you. If you act in such a manner that a Pole can never become a Russian, Russia will never subjugate Poland."

Digitized by Google

as he had had a weak desire to defend it. D'Aiguillon feared lest the King might throw the blame upon him: he affected great anger, and offered to concert with England respecting the Polish question. The English cabinet refused: it only wished to prevent the Prussians from taking Dantzic, and considered itself satisfied with having temporarily succeeded. D'Aiguillon proposed to the King to invade Belgium, then to take up arms in concert with Spain for the purpose of attacking the Russians in the Archipelago, and forcing Catharine to a compromise. Some maritime expeditions were fitted out, in fact, in the beginning of 1773. England signified that she should aid the Russians. Louis XV. recoiled, as D'Aiguillon had calculated; and all was over. If the part of the French government was pitiable in the Polish question, that of the English government was odious. The cabinet of St. James may well be regarded as the fourth of the murderers of Poland.[1]

A maritime intervention against the Russians in 1773 might, indeed, have greatly modified the situation. After completing the occupation of Little Tartary by the conquest of the Crimea, they had crossed the Danube; but there their successes had been arrested. They were driven from Bulgaria by the Turks; and a great rebellion, incited among the Cossacks of the Don and the Jaïk by a counterfeit Peter III., the Cossack Pugatchev, was beginning to reach Moscow, and to imperil the throne of Catharine. A revolution which had been effected in Sweden some months before (August, 1772), with the support and pecuniary encouragement of the cabinet of Versailles, might have increased the dangers of Russia. The young King, Gustavus III., by a military *coup d'état*, had overthrown, in behalf of the royal supremacy, the government of the Senate, a kind of aristocratic republic, established after the death of Charles XII.;[2] and, able to dispose

[1] Ed. Burke, *Annual Register*, 1763, vol. xvi. ch. v.

[2] This revolution divided our writers, like the partition of Poland: it grieved Mabli, who had predicted the fairest destinies to the Swedish constitution; and rejoiced Voltaire, who saw in Gustavus III. a new philosophic monarch. Gustavus began his career after his *coup d'état* by abolishing torture. All the philosophers, except Frederick, agreed in deploring another revolution in an inverse direction which had occurred in Denmark in the preceding month of January, and which precipitated the physician-minister Struensée from the steps of the throne to the scaffold. The establishment of the full liberty of the press, the encroachment upon the privileges of the nobility, the reduction of the somewhat burdensome authority of the Lutheran clergy, and the facilitation of divorce, had signalized the administration, praiseworthy in many respects, and imprudent in some others, of the plebeian whom the love of a queen had imposed on the weak Christian VII. Another queen, the mother of

Digitized by Google

of Sweden, was very desirous of employing its resources in reconquering the provinces wrested from the Swedes by Peter the Great. The inaction of France did not permit Gustavus to undertake an enterprise, the success of which was rendered impossible by the Russo-Prussian alliance. The Turks did not know how to profit by their advantages. In the spring of 1774, the Russians returned to Bulgaria. The Grand Vizier suffered himself to be blockaded in his camp, and forced to a disastrous capitulation. Azof, Jenikale, Kinburn, and the portion of Little Tartary between the Dnieper and the Bug, were ceded to the Czarina. The Ottoman empire renounced the sovereignty of the Crimea, which became independent in the interval of becoming Russian; and free navigation in Ottoman waters was granted to the Russians (July 10, 1774). Catharine, rid of foreign war, crushed the rebellious Cossacks; and Russia strengthened herself at leisure in her usurpation. The covetous Austria, on her side, not content with having compensated herself at the expense of Poland for her losses in the wars of 1733 and 1740, forced Turkey to compensate her, at the expense of the Moldavians, for the services promised, and not rendered; and obtained the cession of an important canton of Moldavia, Bukowina, which commanded the upper part of the Pruth.

While the powers of Eastern Europe were aggrandizing themselves by a daring crime, the government of France was sinking deeper into enervating vices. Shamefully despotic, it did not succeed in making itself feared, although the liberty and interests of many citizens were attacked by its arbitrariness, and the Bastille was always full. None resisted, but all despised it. It was doubtful whether this patience would endure much longer. The high price of grain, which still continued, partly through the fault of Nature and partly through that of men, occasioned frequent riots, especially in the south.[1] The people still continued to lay the blame materially on the bakers, the municipal officers, and the inferior agents of the royal power; but they were beginning to understand that the great monopolizer was at Versailles.[2] As to

Christian, overthrew the citizen and philosopher-minister by a conspiracy of the higher Lutheran nobility. The reforms of Struensée perished with him.

[1] The *maire* of Albi was killed in one of these seditions. At Montauban, the riot was only repressed by a bloody discharge of musketry. At another place, the soldiers refused to fire.

[2] The cry of the populace, on the 5TH and 6TH of OCTOBER, will be remembered: "Let us go to Versailles in search of the *baker*." The royal crime had ceased; the tradition remained.

Digitized by Google

the classes in easy circumstances, their opposition presented a mixture of the old habit of mocking gayety and the earnestness which was taking possession of the French mind. Pleasantry became an edged weapon; irony rose to genius. Maupeou had counted too much on the levity and forgetful temper of France: he had hoped, that, the first flame spent, men would become accustomed to his parliaments. They did not become accustomed to them; and one of those blows from which a new institution never rises was dealt to them in 1773 by a vulgar suit, which a man of prodigious mind made a European event. We need not dwell here upon Beaumarchais, a man of enterprise and a financier, a courtier, a man of pleasure, an intriguer, lastly, a literary man, and a philosopher at his leisure, a kind of inferior Voltaire, in whom public affairs, however, took the first place, and letters the second.[1] It is known how, from a petty incident, the exaction of fifteen louis by the wife of a counsellor for obtaining an interview with her husband, Beaumarchais succeeded in making evident the degradation of all the new magistracy, and taught the public the cost of the *gratuitous justice* of Maupeou. If Beaumarchais showed himself at times the legitimate son of Molière, it was less in his two comedies, so charming and sparkling, but somewhat factitious and in equivocal taste, than in the colloquies of the Memorials against Gœzman and Marin. It suffices to say, for his glory, that Voltaire was jealous of and converted by him. The patriarch believed himself almost threatened with a successor, and abandoned the cause of the Maupeou parliaments.

The leaders of this so much decried government had not even the wisdom to sustain each other against the public hostility. Each of the triumvirs aimed at becoming prime minister. Maupeou, at first, in order to maintain the adulterous alliance between the *Du Barri party* and the former party of the Dauphin, an alliance into which even the pious Christophe de Beaumont had been drawn, went in the morning to communicate at St. Denis, in the presence of Madame Louise, one of the King's daughters who had assumed the Carmelite garb; and, in the afternoon, returned to display his robes at the toilet of the King's mistress. Since he had believed himself triumphant, he had been a little less cringing before the favorite; and his colleague Terrai sought to take advantage of his *ingratitude* to supplant him, and to make himself chancellor and cardinal. There was the stuff in Terrai for a second Dubois. An incident will complete the picture of Versailles at

[1] Born at Paris in 1732.

Digitized by Google

that epoch. One day, the Pope's nuncio, and the grand almoner, the Cardinal de la Roche-Aimon, was seen presenting her slippers to Madame du Barri at her toilet. It is asserted that the favorite carried her madness so far as to dream of marrying the King. She had openly solicited the annulment of her marriage with the Count du Barri, on the ground that the *weakness* which she had had for his brother made it a kind of incest!

The fear of hell still seized the King at times; and it was this that had for a moment suggested to Madame du Barri the ludicrous idea of playing the part of Madame de Maintenon. While the first dignitaries of the Church were prostituting the Roman purple at the feet of a courtesan, a simple priest had dared to raise a Christian voice in Versailles. The Abbé de Beauvais, in preaching the Holy-Thursday sermon for 1773 in the presence of the King and the favorite, stupefied the court by the following allusion: "Solomon, satiated with voluptuousness, and wearied with having exhausted every sort of pleasure around the throne in awakening his palled senses, finally sought a new kind in the vile dregs of public corruption!"

He expected disgrace at least, if not the Bastille: he received a bishopric.[1] Louis XV. rewarded the rude counsellor, but did not profit by the advice. The Du Barris, terrified, plunged him deeper than ever into degradation; and the favorite summoned to her aid all the ignominy of the Parc-aux-Cerfs.[2] Where she sought a support she found ruin, and Louis found death. The obscene old man was at length struck by his own vice, and his last victim hurried him to the tomb. A child scarcely nubile, the daughter of a miller in the suburbs of Trianon, had been enticed away by dint of threats and promises, and delivered over to Louis by the royal procurers. She bore in her bosom the germs of the small-pox, of which she died shortly after, and which she communicated to the King. April 29, 1774, the disease declared itself in Louis XV., complicated with a shameful disorder which was lurking in his vitiated blood.[3] The Du Barris and their allies stood out for a

[1] *Mém. secrets de Bachaumont*, t. VI., March–May, 1773–VII., April, 1774. The Abbé de Beauvais, despite his aristocratic name, belonged to a family of artisans, which is remarked in the *Mémoires* of Bachaumont as a very rare exception among the bishops. Moreover, Beauvais was as intolerant as rigid, and advocated the use of force in religious questions.

[2] We speak metaphorically; for the real Parc-aux-Cerfs, the house in the Rue Saint-Méderic, had been sold by the King in 1771.

[3] His three daughters, who had not had the small-pox, set a noble example of filial devotion by shutting themselves up with him to nurse him.

Digitized by Google

few days against those who talked of repentance and the sacraments. Nevertheless, as the disease continued to grow worse, Louis sent the favorite to the house of the Duke d'Aiguillon at Ruel, and the next morning received the sacraments, declaring, that, "*although he owed an account of his conduct to God alone*, he repented of having scandalized his subjects" (May 6). Expiring absolutism still stammered its formulas amidst the death-rattle.

As at the time of the celebrated journey to Metz in 1744, Versailles, Paris, and all France, anxiously awaited, from day to day and from hour to hour, intelligence of the health of the prince, formerly styled *Louis the Well-beloved;* but this time they trembled with a single fear, — that he might return to life. When it was known that he had finally expired at two o'clock in the afternoon of May 10, an enormous weight seemed lifted from all hearts.[1] His gangrened remains, which infected the air, were transported at full gallop, and without a funeral retinue, to St. Denis, amidst the jeers of the crowd that lined the way.

Louis XV. had lived sixty-four years, and reigned fifty-nine. He had passed his life in destroying by degrees the prestige which the two great Bourbon kings, Henri IV. and Louis XIV., had lent to modern royalty, — a prestige already greatly weakened in the old age of Louis the Great. The enthroning of these agents of dissolution, these personifications of contempt, was a providential sign of the condemnation of the royal race and institution.

[1] The *Mémoires* of Bachaumont quote a piquant saying of the Abbé de Sainte-Geneviève. As some young philosophers were jesting with him on the inefficacy of the intervention of his saint in the illness of the late King, — "Of what do you complain?" he answered: "is he not dead?" — *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. VII. p. 206.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

LOUIS XVI. AND TURGOT.

LOUIS XVI. AND HIS FAMILY. Maurepas summoned to Power. Fall of the *Triumvirate*. TURGOT Comptroller-General. His Plans of Reform: the *Great Municipality of the Kingdom*, etc. Reëstablishment of the Parliaments. Economic Reforms. Freedom of the Grain-trade. Attack of NECKER upon the Plans of Turgot. Coalition of the Privileged Classes against Turgot. The Philosophers divided on the Economic Question. Voltaire the Champion of Turgot. *The Flour War*. The Sedition fomented by the Privileged Classes repressed. Celebrated Remonstrances of the Court of Aids against the Fiscal System. Their Author, Malesherbes, summoned to the Ministry. Numerous Economic Ameliorations. Military Reforms of the Count de Saint-Germain. Abolition of the *Corvée*. Abolition of Wardenships and Masterships of Trade Corporations. Establishment of the Freedom of Commerce and Manufactures. Resistance of the Parliament, and violent Attacks on Turgot. Bed of Justice. Freedom of the Wine-trade. The Princes, Maurepas, the Court, and the Parliament unite against Turgot. Fall of Turgot and Malesherbes.

1774–1776.

THE unfortunate reign of him who was destined to be the last king of ancient France opened amidst the unanimous acclamations of the capital and the kingdom. France experienced nothing but joy on being delivered from the impure old man who had been so long the shame of the nation. Little was known of the new king, who had hitherto lived in great retirement, like his father before him; but it was said that he bore no resemblance to his grandfather, and this was enough for the people.

The sentiments of the court were less decided. The courtiers felt themselves in the hands of a young man of twenty, who manifested none of the tastes of his age and rank, and who seemed to offer them no hold on him. A king without vices or passions was to them a disquieting enigma. Even those of the men of the court who rejoiced to see the end of the ignoble sway of the Du Barri party feared lest Versailles might pass from one extreme to the other. A saying of Louis XVI., while yet Dauphin, had caused a sort of panic among the courtiers. While at Paris, as a stinging epigram on his grandfather, he had been surnamed Louis the *Desired:* some of the courtiers having one day asked him what surname he preferred, "I would like," he replied,

Digitized by Google

"to be called *Louis the Severe*."[1] A harsh and gloomy reign was therefore dreaded at Versailles. The expression of abruptness and ill-humor, which was in some degree habitual to the youthful monarch, strengthened these apprehensions. The education which he had received from his governor, La Vauguyon, had increased his natural shyness, the cause of which was not harshness, as was supposed, but timidity, and repugnance to the state of manners of which he was a witness. Any one who had more attentively examined his physiognomy, from which the majesty blended with elegance, the grand Bourbon air, preserved by Louis XV. even in his degradation, had disappeared, would have discerned therein, under a vulgar expression, a groundwork of goodness, and, above all, of great integrity. It was not the features that were vulgar, but the carriage, the gesture, the precocious obesity, the awkward and ungraceful mien, the hesitating and embarrassed speech. He was only at his ease in the midst of his books; for he was well instructed, and very fond of the natural sciences; or, still better, in his locksmith's shop. If he had a passion, it was for manual labor. He followed the precepts of *Émile* through taste, and not through system. Nature had given him the faculties of a skilful and upright mechanic: human laws had made him the head of an empire, to his own misfortune and that of his people.

The rudeness of his manners and his fretful disposition were destined to become softened by acquaintance with the family affections, so powerful over simple natures; but, at this epoch, the pleasures of private life were still unknown to him. An icy barrier, so to speak, subsisted between him and his young wife, which nothing had been able to melt. La Vauguyon, through hatred of Choiseul, supposed to be much more Austrian than he was in reality, had suggested to the Dauphin tenacious prejudices against the daughter of Maria Theresa, the instrument through whom her ambitious mother aspired, he said, to govern France. This was not all: Louis XVI. was not yet truly the husband of Marie-Antoinette. A secret infirmity, a defect of conformation, over which the art of the physicians succeeded in triumphing a little later, made him despair of ever having heirs.[2]

The true character of Louis XVI., unknown at his accession, and wrongly interpreted afterwards by other causes, appears in two truly precious documents, which produce very different im-

[1] *Droz, Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 118.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 122. There are frequent allusions to this circumstance in the Secret Memoirs, attributed to Bachaumont.

Digitized by Google

pressions. The one is the *Journal*, written by his own hand during his reign;[1] the other, composed by him before his accession, is entitled *My Reflections on my Conversations with the Duke de La Vauguyon.*[2] The *Journal* is incredibly monotonous: the chase, meals, and the mass appear on every page. "I have missed two hunts. I have digested badly." He found few other events to record in those formidable days, which were deciding his fate and that of France! He noted in his account-book items of expenditure of the amount of four sous. Little is found in this *Journal* but innocence and poverty of mind. The *Reflections* are very different. In this well-considered work, the upright but somewhat commonplace sense of Louis attains at times a much greater height than could have been expected from it: there is sometimes loftiness, and always sensibility. It is, so to speak, a reflection of the late Duke of Burgundy, cast on Louis XVI. from the late Dauphin, his father. As to the principles, they are absolutism, tempered by Christian sentiment. The King is the sole power: legislation belongs to him alone. It is his *right* to levy taxes for the necessities of the State (without consulting his subjects), but his *duty* to practise economy. Some of the maxims of Rousseau and the economists insinuate themselves through these notions of the past. For instance: The sovereign should legislate only by general acts. There are long observations on the knowledge of men, on firmness, and on irresolution. "I am content," he says, "with what I find in my own heart" (on firmness)! He thus strove to reassure himself concerning his own character, and to strengthen himself in advance. The fate of Charles I. already excites his uneasiness: this name exercises a sort of remote fascination over him. This little book wrings the heart. The *Journal* obtains only disdainful compassion; it is the man in the triviality of the daily routine in which he is absorbed: but the *Reflections* inspire a painful esteem and sympathy; they are the man communing with his conscience, and elevating himself above his nature by the force of moral and religious sentiment.

Louis XVI. was quite the reverse of what he wished to be; that is, he was indecision itself. Later, the variations of weakness would be regarded in him as the schemes of insincerity, and would precipitate him upon the scaffold! Like Louis XV., he saw well, and acted ill: he had good judgment, but derived no

[1] Published in extracts in the *Revue rétrospective.*

[2] Paris, 1851, 8vo.

Digitized by Google

advantage from it in action, not through selfish carelessness, like his grandfather, but through distrust of himself, through lack of will, and consistency of mind. A nature devoted to misfortune, a defenceless victim, destined, like the sacrifices of antique systems of religion, to expiate the errors and crimes of others, — these are the hardest mysteries of history and Providence. What had he done to be born a king?

Louis offered the most absolute contrast to his kindred as well as to the court. The new Queen bore no more resemblance to her mother, Maria Theresa, than to her husband. Lively, impetuous, wholly spontaneous, violent and generous; alike hasty in her affections and her antipathies; ruling herself in every thing by feeling, and not by reflection; reacting instinctively against that *decorum* which was the first law with her mother, and with much greater reason against that insupportable etiquette of the seventeenth century which had survived dignity and elegance of manners in France under Louis XV., and the disappearance of which had been witnessed at Vienna since the accession of the House of Lorraine, — Marie-Antoinette had all the animation and originality in which her husband was lacking: but, at this epoch, she possessed as yet no influence over him, and, as will be but too well seen, it was not to be desired that she should acquire this influence. Very badly brought up, and very ignorant, nothing had been done to form her judgment and to restrain her nature, as energetic in its faults as in its happy qualities. She was wholly lacking in tact. That subversion of etiquette, that familiar simplicity, that free life which she openly allowed herself, might have been a power, a source of popularity, in a young queen full of grace and attraction.[1] But, for this, it was necessary that Marie-Antoinette should know how to turn the gratification of her tastes to political advantage, and that the public should be able to see, in this abandonment of ancient usages, an assent to the new philosophy, a pledge offered to progress. If, on the contrary, the Queen clung with one hand to the prejudices and privileges which she shook off with the other, nought but caprice and levity would be seen in the innovations introduced by her at court; and ere long the interpretations still more fatal to the honor of the throne, which were already insinuated by her enemies, would be accepted. The system of defamation under which the daughter of Maria Theresa

[1] Large, and admirably well made: . . . with the best mien of any woman in France, carrying her head high on a beautiful Greek neck. — *Mém. de madame Vigée-Lebrun*, t. I. p. 64.

Digitized by Google

was to succumb had commenced from the moment that she had set foot in France. From the first day, she found herself the butt of the cabal of La Vauguyon and the ex-Jesuits, who regarded her marriage as the work of their enemy Choiseul, and of the Du Barri party, who feared the ascendency which she might gain at court.[1] Always, as long as Maria Theresa reigned, she was destined to meet some interest or rabid passion continuing this hidden work. The axe of the populace which was to strike off her royal head was forged long in advance on the steps of the throne. The secret intrigues of the first enemies of the Queen would be taken up by the King's own brother, the Count de Provence; that heartless wit, who was one day to be Louis XVIII., a young man without youth, a cold and insincere soul, a sceptic, who had nothing of his age except the negations.[2]

Louis XVI. had still another brother, Charles, the Count d'Artois, who differed equally from his two elder brothers. The latter, giddy, noisy, and dissolute, with an open heart and an easy temper, had all the faults of youth, without any prominent good quality or marked characteristic. Among the princes of the blood, the Condés, with a somewhat military tendency, seemed, nevertheless, too mediocre to be destined to any rôle of importance; and the Duke of Orleans, the grandson of the Regent, cared only for the pleasures of private life. Two princes alone were adapted to play an important part in the times which were approaching: one was that Conti, of a restless and active intellect, who has often figured in our narrative, but who was becoming prematurely old from an irregular life; the other was the son of the Duke of Orleans, Philippe, the Duke de Chartres, a lover of noisy debauches and of every kind of bustle and excitement. He had imbibed from his age a taste for innovations, whatever they might be, as the Count de Provence had imbibed a taste for scepticism. He was found wherever a new idea or a new fact appeared; although there was in this neither an enlightened and earnest love of progress,

[1] See the *Mémoires* of the ex-Jesuit Georgel, one of the enemies of the Queen, t. I.

[2] The most infamous rumors concerning the morals of the Queen were circulated long before her quarrel with the Duke de Chartres; and the Royalist writers have been wrong in imputing them to the Palais-Royal, which only repeated them afterwards. See what is said in the *Mémoires* of Bachaumont of the lampoons against the Queen, which were current in 1776, t. IX. pp. 54, 61, 69; and what is related by the Abbé Baudeau in his *Chronique secrète*, from 1774, ap. *Revue rétrospective*, t. III. p. 381, 1834. Baudeau imputes the *horrible things* which were retailed concerning the Queen to the cabal of the chancellor and the King's aunts. The accusation appears to us unjust or exaggerated as to the aunts of the King.

Digitized by Google

nor the calculation of so profound an ambition as was afterwards imputed to him. He agitated for the sake of agitating, and was destined always to be hurried away by events, and never to direct them.

Louis XVI. began his career by an act of ill-sustained severity, followed by an act of weakness. He sent Madame du Barri to a convent; then permitted her to leave it, and to retire to her beautiful estate of Louvecienne, near Marly.[1] The public expected that the ministry would follow the favorite. Louis had not yet resolved on his course in this respect; but, feeling that none of the *triumvirs* deserved confidence, he sought a confidential counsellor outside of his cabinet who could guide his inexperience. The Queen, docile to her mother's impulse, desired Choiseul's recall. Maria Theresa, although Choiseul had shown himself much too French to satisfy her, would have greatly preferred him in the ministry of foreign affairs to the Duke d'Aiguillon, who had sought the support of Prussia. The court quite generally formed the same wish, and the public was not unfavorable to it; but the prejudices of the King were unconquerable. He declared that the man who had been wanting in respect to his father should never be his minister. He suspected Choiseul of having done more than offend his father, and insinuations as atrocious as improbable had left their traces in his mind.

The King's first thought rested on a statesman who had been absent seventeen years from public affairs, — M. de Machault. Louis knew that his father had retained great esteem for this ex-comptroller-general; although he was viewed with an unfriendly eye by the clergy, whose pecuniary privileges he had threatened.[2] Machault, without being by any means a perfect statesman, had incontestable probity, broad reformatory views with respect to finance, and the force of character necessary to realize them. The choice was a sensible one: no sooner, therefore, was the King's intention suspected, than the interests opposed to the public good combined together to dissuade him from his design. La Vauguyon was dead; but the ex-Jesuit Radonvilliers, formerly sub-preceptor to the King, the organ of the clerical party, and the ministers D'Aiguillon and La Vrillière,[3] gained over Madame

[1] She died on the scaffold during the Reign of Terror.

[2] See, in Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I., the list of several persons recommended by the Dauphin to the one of his children who should succeed Louis XV. This list is curious.

[3] Saint-Florentin, become the Duke de La Vrillière.

Digitized by Google

Adelaide, one of the King's aunts, who made pretensions to politics, and had some credit with her nephew. Madame Adelaide suggested a different name to Louis, that of another minister hurled from power by Madame de Pompadour eight years before Machault; the witty, selfish, and frivolous Maurepas, the uncle of D'Aiguillon, and the brother-in-law of La Vrillière. He was seventy-three years old. Madame Adelaide pretended that age and retirement had rendered him wise and grave, while respecting the charms of his mind and the quickness of his intellect. Maurepas figured, like Machault, in the list of persons recommended by the late Dauphin. Louis believed his aunt, and recalled a page, who had already mounted his horse, to carry to Machault a letter summoning him to Versailles. It is pretended that the address alone was changed, and that the letter written to Machault served for Maurepas.[1] Louis wished at first, it is said, only to consult Maurepas; but the cunning old man, after the first interview, suddenly found himself prime minister in fact, almost before the King was aware of it.[2] It was in this manner that Louis XVI. practised his maxims on firmness, the knowledge of men, and the distinction which should be made by kings between a solid and a frivolous mind. He replaced the State, on the eve of the tempest, in the hands of a man whom the Marquis de Mirabeau too justly styled the *Paroquet of the Regency*, who fancied himself able to ward off a revolution with a jest, and who was incapable of any other policy than that which had caused Louis XV. to say, "*It will last quite as long as I!*"

The public had scarcely formed a definite opinion of Maurepas, of whom it had so long lost sight; but it awaited with extreme impatience the fall of the triumvirate and of the Maupeou parliaments, two questions which it confounded together, but which,

[1] *Droz, Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 125–127; *Mém. de madame Campan.* (reader to the aunts of Louis XVI.), t. I. p. 89. The letter is in the *Mémoires de Bachaumont*, t. VII. p. 196; London, 1777.

[2] His plan of rule was simple: he told the young King that an administrator could properly execute only his own ideas, and that it was consequently necessary either to adopt them or to dismiss him; at the same time, he requested each of the ministers to make no important proposition without first conferring with him. The ministers, therefore, were to propose nothing but what suited Maurepas, and the King was to approve every thing which the ministers proposed. The Mentor was present whenever a project was submitted to the King; and, if he was dissatisfied with it, he could avail himself of his privilege to converse with the King at any time to demonstrate that the moment had come to refuse to follow the ideas of the administrator, and to dismiss him. — *Droz, Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 128. The Count de Maurepas assumed no other official rank than that of minister without a department.

Digitized by Google

nevertheless, were distinct. The ministers made desperate efforts to sustain themselves. The Abbé Terrai presented to the King a financial report, drawn up with extreme ability,[1] in which he passed lightly over all his obnoxious operations; laid great stress on the increase of the receipts due to his care; and represented, that if the balance reëstablished by him had been disturbed anew, and he had been obliged again to commence the anticipations and other expedients, the fault had been in the increased expenditures in the other ministerial departments and in the King's household,[2] contrary to the promises of reduction which had been made him. He concluded by affirming that it was impossible to hope for any notable increase in the revenue from the taxes, which were raised to their maximum; and that economy, therefore, was absolutely necessary. "I can add nothing more to the receipts, which I have increased sixty millions. I can deduct nothing more from the debt, which I have reduced twenty millions. . . It is for you, sire, to relieve your people by reducing your expenses. This work, so worthy of your *sensibility*, has been reserved for you."

The Abbé Terrai talking of *sensibility* was like the wolf bewailing the sheep; but his work was none the less specious, and adapted to make an impression on Louis XVI. He strengthened his words by deeds, by hastening to propose a measure which he knew to be in the heart of the young King. The first ordinance signed by Louis XVI., proclaiming that the felicity of the people depended chiefly on a wise financial administration, announced that the arrears of *rentes*, posts, interests, and various debts, and the redemptions promised, would be faithfully acquitted; that funds were set apart for this purpose; that the King was employing himself in reducing his personal expenses and those pertaining to the *pomp of the court;* and, lastly, that the King remitted to his subjects the revenue arising from the tribute which belonged to him on the occasion of his accession to the crown.[3]

[1] It is just to say that this document was not prepared in view of the circumstances. According to documents preserved in the Terrai Family, this same report had been already presented to Louis XV., March 20, 1774.

[2] The expenses of the households of the King and the Princes had been increased from twenty-six to more than thirty-six millions since the formation of the households of the Dauphiness, the brothers and the sisters-in-law of the Dauphin. — See *Comptes rendus des Finances*, 1751–1787, pp. 115, 169. The households of the King's two brothers and their wives cost together seven million three hundred and twelve thousand livres, equal to twelve or thirteen millions at the present time. — *Ibid.*, p. 141. Many sovereigns had not such households.

[3] Registered May 30 in the parliament of Paris. — *See Anciennes Lois françaises,*

Digitized by Google

The *droit de joyeux avénement* had been farmed out for twenty-three million under Louis XV., and had cost the tax-payers more than forty-one millions! The farmers had made nearly a hundred per cent.

At the same time, bread fell, in consequence of a bad speculation of the association of the *Pact of Famine*, which had been unable to sell in foreign countries, already sufficiently supplied, the grain exported from France by secret permits, and had been obliged to bring it back to the French markets.[1] Some first reforms were effected at court,[2] in conformity with the King's promise; and a large number of persons imprisoned by *lettres de cachet* was released by degrees.

The impression on the public was not such as had been hoped at Versailles. The hand through which the boon came took away its value. The remission of the *joyous accession* was approved; but the language of the ordinance, which sanctioned this tribute while forbearing to demand it, was censured. This pretended tribute, it was said, was merely a feudal exaction not recognized by the parliaments. The gracious reception accorded by the King and Queen to the deputation from the Maupeou parliament (June 5) displeased the bourgeoisie. The price of bread was not long in rising again, and disappointing the hopes of the indigent classes.

Public opinion, nevertheless, had obtained a first satisfaction. The Duke d'Aiguillon was no longer in the ministry. Detested by the Queen, he had had the imprudence to patronize somewhat too openly the sayings and ballads which were circulated against Marie-Antoinette by the ancient cabals hostile to the Austrian marriage, increased by the courtiers whom the Queen wounded by her thoughtless satire. Marie-Antoinette demanded justice on the insolence of the minister; and Maurepas believed himself unable to support his nephew, although he partly owed him his new posi-

t. XXIII. pp. 4–7. Marie-Antoinette renounced, on her side, the tribute called the *droit de ceinture de la reine* (Right of the Queen's Girdle).

[1] *Mém. sur l'administration de l'abbé Terrai*, p. 226; *Merc. historique*, t. CLXXVI. p. 673.

[2] "The extraordinary expenses, the petty expenses, the *grand commun* (service of the tables of certain officers of the King's household), the governors of the royal households, and the court theatricals, are abolished, . . . with deer-hunting and hawking. Considerable reformation is made in the stables and kennels. The King has given orders that but a single table shall be served at court, which shall be common to his Majesty, the Queen, Monsieur, Madame, and the Count and Countess d'Artois."—*Merc. hist.*, t. CLXXVI. p. 671.

Digitized by Google

tion. D'Aiguillon was forbidden to appear again at court. Of the two ministries which he had held, that of foreign affairs was intrusted to the Count de Vergennes, who had given proof of diplomatic talent in the embassies to Constantinople and Stockholm (June 8): the other, the ministry of war, was given to the Count de Mui, a rigid devotee and a laborious administrator, the most esteemed among the friends of the late Dauphin.

After an interval of a few weeks, a second change took place, which made less noise, but which was of far more real importance than the dismissal of D'Aiguillon. The minister of the marine, De Boines, an intriguer, who was regarded as the ally of Maupeou, was removed. Maurepas, at the instigation of his wife, herself advised by a philosopher-priest, the Abbé de Véri, caused De Boines to be replaced by Turgot, whose administration of the generality of Limoges[1] had long attracted the eyes and hopes of enlightened men. Turgot had voluntarily remained in the second-class intendancy of Limousin. He had become attached to this destitute province by the good which he had done it, and had refused, as early as 1762, two first-class intendancies, Rouen and Lyons.[2] He did not deem himself justified in refusing, with the ministry, the great duties and ordeals for which he had long been preparing himself. He accepted the wholly special department which was offered him, as a transition to a more direct and general action on the fate of the country (July 19–22, 1774).

Maurepas, too sceptical to seek true renown, delighted in drawing-room praise and success: he had been persuaded that the men who ruled public opinion gave him infinite credit for his choice of Turgot; and, on the other hand, he did not think that his ministerial supremacy would ever have any thing to fear from a philosopher as much a stranger to the court by tastes as by connections, and unsuited to those intrigues, which, to men like Maurepas, constitute the sum total of political science. The sensation produced by Turgot's appointment was lively indeed among the lettered classes, but slight among the populace of Paris, who knew little of the intendant of Limoges. The King and Queen were none the less coldly received in the first visit which they made during the interval to Paris. Maupeou and Terrai were still in office: the exile of the ex-magistrates had not yet ceased, and bread was still dear.

[1] Limousin and part of Angoumois.

[2] He had wished to remain in Limousin, in order to establish there the *tariffed villain-tax*, in conformity with the royal declaration which he had obtained December 30, 1761. — See *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 486.

Digitized by Google

Maupeou decided, and decided the King. Without a fixed course, without a system, and ready to try any thing according to circumstances, there was nothing in the aged minister that could lead him to resist the least pressure of public opinion. August 24, Maupeou received orders to restore the seals, which were intrusted to Hue de Miromesnil, formerly first president of that parliament of Rouen which had contended so energetically against despotism. He was, personally, a man of little value as to capacity and morality: his chief recommendation was his relationship to Maurepas. Terrai was dismissed the same day. Turgot was transferred from the marine to the comptroller-generalship, the post to which he was called by the wishes of enlightened men. The aged Quesnai had the joy, before his death,[1] of seeing this illustrious adept of his school in possession of the ministry of finance. Madame de Maurepas, who governed her husband as her husband governed the King, caused the marine to be given to the lieutenant-general of police, Sartine. She made a less happy choice this time than when she had suffered herself to be guided by the condisciple of Turgot, the Abbé de Véri. Sartine, an able chief of police, and the author of various material improvements in Paris,[2] but compromised by his disgraceful complaisance in the infamous deeds of Louis XV., brought nothing to the government but a spirit of arbitrariness and corruption, and had, moreover, no aptitude for the noble ministry that was intrusted to him, as was but too well experienced.

Maupeou and Terrai, it must be admitted, met their fall in very different attitudes. Maupeou, who had introduced himself into power by cringing, had begun to lift his head as soon as he believed himself strengthened. He endured disgrace with unexpected pride. "I have caused the King to win a great suit," he said. "He wishes to call again in question what has been decided: he is at liberty to do so." He refused to resign his irremovable office of chancellor, and never made an effort to reappear at court.[3] Terrai did not preserve this haughty bearing in his fall. The King compelled him to restore a bonus of four hundred and fifty thousand francs which he had exacted on the recent renewal

[1] He died December 16, 1774.

[2] He had introduced street-lamps in 1766, in the place of the old-fashioned lanterns of La Reinie, by means of a voluntary subscription among the property-holders. The Corn Market and the Free School of Design also date from his administration; but so do the official recognition and taxation of gaming-houses.

[3] He did not die until 1792, at the age of seventy-eight.

Digitized by Google

of the lease of the farms, an abuse already of long standing, and which ceased at the accession of Turgot. Terrai was constrained besides to refund a sum of nearly equal amount for the works which he had caused to be executed at the expense of the State, near his château of La Motte.[1] He would not have been released at this price if the people had been consulted.

The fall of the two ministers was celebrated indeed, at Paris and elsewhere, with demonstrations, the violence of which called to mind and presaged times very different from the gentleness of the prevailing manners. Maupeou and Terrai were hung in effigy on Mount Sainte-Geneviève, and Terrai narrowly escaped being thrown into the river in person while crossing the Seine in a ferry-boat at Choisy. The pupils at the Cours-la-Reine caused a manikin in the chancellor's gown to be drawn and quartered by four donkeys. For several evenings, the clerks of the *basoche* (the jurisdiction of the solicitors of the parliament of Paris) mingled with the people from the Cité, sang, shouted, and discharged rockets, under the windows of the first president of the Maupeou parliament. The archers charged with guarding the Palais attempting to oppose them, they fell on the former, put them to flight, and beat an exempt to death in the public square.

The statesman who wished to spare France the era of vengeance which the resentment of the populace foreboded had commenced his laborious ministry.

August 24, the same day that he was called to replace Terrai, Turgot, immediately after an interview with the King, summed up in writing the propositions which he had laid before Louis XVI., in order to fix them in the memory of the youthful monarch, and which were as follows: There should be no bankruptcies, no increase of taxes, and no loans. In times of peace, the government should not borrow except to liquidate old debts, or to redeem other loans at a more onerous rate of interest. The expenditure of twenty millions over and above the receipts should be reduced at any price. The leaders of the other departments should be obliged to concert with the minister of finance concerning the expenditures of their ministries, and to discuss these expenditures with him in

[1] There were large storehouses in this place, on the shores of the Seine, which were let to the Malisset Company.

[2] *Mérc. hist.*, t. CLXXVII. p. 330; *Mém. sur l'administration de l'abbé Terrai*, p. 230; Droz, t. I. p. 139. A writing of the times (*Journal historique*) was not afraid to jest on the name of this unfortunate, who was called Bouteille: "The *bottle* (bouteille) is broken." This savored already of the jests on the *lamp-post*.

Digitized by Google

the King's presence. There should be no more direct or indirect favors concerning the taxes, no more gratuitous interests in the farms, and no more privileged shares (*croupes*) or free patents. Economy was the necessary preface to reforms, which, without greatly lessening the public revenues, would relieve the people *by the improvement of agriculture, by the abolition of the abuses in the collection of the taxes, and by the more equitable apportionment of these taxes.* It was necessary to begin by shaking off the supremacy of the financiers.

"I do not ask his Majesty to accept my principles without examining them; . . . but, when he has perceived their justice and necessity, I entreat him to maintain their execution with firmness, without suffering himself to be dismayed by the clamors which it is impossible to avoid. I shall be alone in contending against abuses of all kinds; against the host of prejudices which are opposed to all reformation, and which are so powerful an instrument in the hands of men interested in perpetuating the disorder. I shall have to struggle against the natural goodness and generosity of his Majesty and of those who are dearest to him. I shall be feared, and even hated, by the greater part of the court. All refusals will be laid to my charge. I shall be depicted as a harsh man, because I have represented to his Majesty that he should not enrich even those whom he loves at the expense of the subsistence of his people. Those people to whom I shall have sacrificed myself are so easily deceived, that perchance I shall incur their hatred by the very measures which I take in their defence. I shall be calumniated, and perhaps with sufficient probability to deprive me of the confidence of his Majesty."

He concluded by calling to mind that the King affectionately pressed his hands in his own as if to accept his devotion. "His Majesty will remember that it is on the faith of his promises that I undertake a burden perchance beyond my strength; and that it is to him personally, to the upright, just, and good man, rather than to the King, that I abandon myself." [1]

Louis, at once touched and subjugated by the accent of virtue and the authority of a great character, renewed the pledge to support his minister; and Turgot entered with a firm tread upon the career, all the perils of which he had so well measured with his eye. He had set forth to the King, to use his own words, only the *preface* of the work which he meditated: he deferred unfolding his full plan to Louis until after a first series of im-

[1] *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 165.

Digitized by Google

portant reforms had cleared the ground for the construction of the new edifice. The analysis previously given[1] of his theories, and of those of his friends the economists, has already shown his ideas on the questions of taxation and labor: the final aim of these, at least, was a single and direct tax, and the unlimited freedom of commerce and manufactures. As to the administrative, political, and social institutions, the necessary means, not only of establishing or maintaining economic reforms, but of attaining a still higher end, — the development of popular patriotism, morality, and intelligence, — we possess a plan written in conformity with his ideas, and under his eyes, by one of his intimate friends (Dupont de Nemours, according to all appearances), entitled *Memorial to the King on the Municipalities*. This modest title covers a complete constitution of the kingdom.

The spirit of the eighteenth century was found entire in the beginning of this memorial. Turgot, or his interpreter, clearly opposed reason to tradition, right to facts. The point in question was, not to know what was or what had been, but what should be. This was not for science, but for the conscience, to decide. "The rights of men united in society are not founded on history, but on their nature." It was necessary to throw aside the diversity of the existing forms in order to establish a uniform organization based on the rights and the interests of all. Turgot set forth with great clearness the reasons why there was no public spirit in France: "The evil arises from the fact, that the nation has no constitution." It was a nation, the members of which had very few social ties among themselves: scarcely any one was acquainted with his duties, or his legal relations to the other members of the State. Men waited for special orders from the King on every occasion; and the King was obliged to issue commands concerning every thing, even those things which it was impossible for him to know, both to himself and to his ministers, and to the delegates of his ministers. Individuals having neither guarantees nor definite functions in the State, and not being accustomed to regard themselves as active members thereof, considered themselves, on the contrary, as if at war with the State, and sought each to escape his share of the taxation.[2] The government had

[1] See *ante*, pp. 177–178.

[2] From this arose the fatal habit of unscrupulously deceiving the treasury, — a habit which still exists, and which renders so difficult the assessment of the tax on personal property, nevertheless, very just. The habit of expecting every thing from the State has likewise survived our seventy years of revolution. The evils denounced by Turgot were deeply rooted.

Digitized by Google

systematically stifled public spirit in the germ by forbidding the rural communes to join together for the purpose of executing the public works in which they were interested.

The point in question was to find forms and institutions according to which the greater part of the things that were to be done would be done of themselves (that is, by the citizens), without the necessity of the King's coöperation, otherwise than by the general protection which he owed his subjects.

It was the plan of these institutions which the author set forth, — institutions calculated to attach individuals to their families, families to their village or town, towns and villages to the *arrondissement*, arrondissements to the provinces, and provinces to the State.

1. The basis of the whole edifice was a council of national instruction. There were methods and institutions for training geometricians, physicists, and painters: there were none for training citizens. The council should cause standard works to be written, in which the study of the duties of the citizen should be the foundation of all others. Religious instruction (given by the clergy) was not sufficient as to the morality to be observed among citizens. Each parish should have its schoolmaster commissioned to teach this morality; and the same spirit should be introduced into institutions of all grades (education, therefore, was alone in question: instruction was only the means, and education the end). In ten years, the nation would not be recognizable.

2. It was unnecessary to wait for this result in order to pass to the second part of the plan; that is, to begin to transform into true municipalities the existing villages, — mere assemblages of cabins and of inhabitants, as passive as their wretched abodes. The objects of the municipal administration of the villages should be, 1st, The apportionment of the taxes; 2d, The public works and the cross-roads; 3d, The superintendence of the poor and their relief; 4th, The relations of the commune with the neighboring villages and with the arrondissement as to the public works, and the transmission of the wishes of the commune in this respect to the proper authority. The terrier and the equitable apportionment of the taxes would thus be made of themselves. The public works of the communes would serve to give employment to the poor during the dull season.

The voting system was derived from the physiocratic principle, that the earth alone is productive. The owners of the soil, in conformity with this principle, should alone be called upon to

Digitized by Google

regulate the economic interests of society. They should vote in proportion to their estates. In this manner the earth would be represented, and not the man. The electorship of Turgot on this point is merely the transformation, instead of the abolition, of the feudal principle.[1] It must not, however, be forgotten, that, according to Turgot, rights are inseparable from burdens, and that the land-holders alone were to bear these burdens, and to bear them all. He discloses this final aim here to the King, and shows him at the end of the course the abolition of the special taxes weighing upon the *roturiers* alone, and of the taxes on consumption, for which a direct tax was to be substituted. There would be, therefore, in future, but a single class of voters, as there would be but a single class of tax-payers. As to the present, when the apportionment of the villain-tax was in question, the privileged persons were to vote with those subject to this tax, in proportion to their estates which were farmed out, and were subject to this tax on cultivation,[2] deducting the estates which they worked themselves and which were exempt. The nobles were to vote with the *roturiers* concerning the apportionment of the twentieths; the ecclesiastics were to vote with the nobles and the *roturiers* concerning the public works, the relief of the poor, and the apportionment of the imposts which the King might establish in the place of the indirect taxes: that is, whoever voted was to pay a direct tax, and was to vote in proportion to what he paid.[3] These complications might be simplified afterwards (by arriving at a single tax).

The assemblies of villages should appoint a mayor or president, and a recorder.

3. Analogous institutions in the towns should replace the existing municipalities, petty republics with a selfish local spirit, unconnected either with each other or with the State, and tyrannical to the rural districts about them, as well as to their own industrial and commercial laborers. In the towns, the owners of

[1] However much we may differ from the physiocrats on this point, it is just to admit a difference between the national and the municipal right of suffrage. Admitting that, in a normally constituted and fully developed community, every citizen should participate in the general interests of the State, it is not so evident that every citizen that finds himself temporarily in a commune, without having any vested interests therein, and who may quit it to-morrow, should participate in the affairs of this commune. Conditions of time and residence may be admissible here, if not of property.

[2] He designed to lay the villain-tax on estates cultivated by *roturiers* upon the owners of the land at the end of the existing leases.

[3] The laboring-men of the rural districts were to be freed from the villain-tax.

Digitized by Google

houses alone should vote in proportion to the value of their estates. The towns, having interests more complicated than the villages, should elect municipal officers charged with the administration, and responsible to the electors: in the large cities, there should be a magistrate of police appointed by the King. They should be subdivided into district assemblies. The *octrois* of the towns should be abolished; the debts contracted by the towns on the King's account should be paid by the King, and those contracted for the benefit of the towns should be paid by the land-holders by annuities. Assistance at home should be substituted for the assistance given in the hospitals. The public granaries should be abolished, and the provisioning of the cities left to free trade.

4. The municipalities of the towns and villages should be under the jurisdiction, with respect to the interests and public works common to a certain extent of territory, of arrondissement municipalities composed of deputies from all the towns and villages. These municipalities of the second degree should also vote assistance to parishes afflicted by the scourges of nature, and should settle certain intestine disputes which might take place in the assemblies of the first degree.

5. The arrondissement municipalities should be under the jurisdiction, in turn, of provincial municipalities, composed of deputies appointed by the arrondissement assemblies: these assemblies of the third degree should be intrusted with the provincial interests, and should succor the calamities which exceeded the powers of the arrondissements.

6. Above the provincial municipalities, lastly, should tower the great municipality, or the general municipality of the kingdom, formed of deputies elected by the provincial assemblies, and the highest limit of all the hierarchy. The ministers should have a seat and voice therein. The King, at the opening of the session, should give notice, either in person or through his minister of finance, of the sums which he would need for the expenses of the State, and of the public works which he might see fit to order; and should leave the assembly at liberty to add such other works as it might desire, and to grant to the suffering provinces the aid which it might deem necessary. The assembly should express its wishes on whatever subjects might seem good to it.

The deputies to the provincial and national municipalities should be indemnified.

Here is found a theory of assistance to all classes, from the individual to the province.

Digitized by Google

Each one should, as far as possible, provide for his own wants by his own energies. The individual who was able to work, and could find work to do, needed to ask aid from no one. If necessities overtook him which really exceeded his powers, he should address himself to those nearest to him, his relatives and friends, before having recourse to any other assistance; and his relatives and friends should not be authorized to call upon the public until they had themselves done all they could in his behalf. This course should be followed, from the simple private individual to provinces soliciting benefactions from the State (that is, the municipality afflicted by a blight, a murrain, etc., should first ask assistance from the municipalities with which it was in habitual intercourse; after which the latter should recommend it to the arrondissement, and so on).

The rural municipalities should be constituted first, then the urban municipalities a month later; and, three or four months after, a great edict should be issued concerning the complete hierarchy of the municipalities.

Turgot had at first hoped that a year's ministry would suffice to prepare for the realization of his project: he then postponed it for another year, until the autumn of 1776, in order to have time to pave the way by laws in favor of the laboring-classes, and to revise and rewrite the work edited by his friend, and at the same time to complete it by plans of laws fully securing individual freedom, and the freedom of commerce and manufactures, before submitting it to the King. These laws were for the benefit of the classes who were strangers to real estate and to the rights which were designed for the land-holders.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the greatness of this plan. As to the singular combination which led a spiritualistic philosopher to propose a materialistic electoral system,—as to the point most at variance with the ideas of civic right established by Rousseau, it is important to remark that Turgot was separated from democracy by an economic error alone. Had he admitted, as every one does at the present time, the *productiveness* of all useful labor, he would have finally recognized, at least virtually, the political right of every citizen; for the economic school acknowledged the principle of property in the arm of the laborer as well as in the soil of the land-owner, and made no difference except in the productiveness.

Moreover, even on this point, it must not be forgotten that the substitution for the despotism of the intendants and farmers-

Digitized by Google

general, and the pecuniary privileges of the nobility, the clergy, and all others exempt from burdens, of the administration of the economic interests of the country by the entire class of landed proprietors, was an immense progress. There is reason to believe, however, that the landed proprietors would soon have deemed this political privilege too dearly purchased by the obligation to bear the whole weight of the taxation.

All that was erroneous or questionable in the plans of Turgot came from others, — from the school of which he was a member: all that was beautiful, true, and profound therein belonged to him exclusively, with the exception of the great idea of public instruction laid down as the basis of society; an idea, the glory of which he shared with all the physiocratic school, or rather with all the eighteenth century. To him, indeed, belonged the idea of a nation animated everywhere by a uniform impulse, public life awakened in every degree of the territorial scale, and that beautiful theory of assistance which preserves in the poor the dignity of the man and the citizen by assimilating individual poverty to collective poverty, and by applying the same principle to the succor granted to private individuals as to the succor granted to a community. This, indeed, was true solidarity, true social fraternity, conceived by the great apostle of individuality. The reason was, that in him individuality meant liberty, and not selfishness. To him belonged the honor of having sought to combine federalism with unity, — unity without the bureaucratic concentration which was stifling, and which still stifles, France. What progress since the plans of D'Argenson, who saw only royalty and the commune, and nothing between the two![1] Here the communes were at once independent in their private interests, and firmly allied to the State in an ascending scale with respect to the common interests. The King, the central power, retained the final decision in affairs of the State: but the assemblies of different degrees were sovereign in the affairs of the commune, the arrondissement, and the province, and were at liberty to propose measures concerning the affairs of the State; the King reserving the right of accomplishing the reforms which he deemed necessary, even though they might not be proposed by the assembly.

Did Turgot think that the power of proposing would be transformed in time into the power of deliberating, and that the great municipality, sharing the legislative power with the King, would become a unitary national assembly, substituted for the ancient

[1] See vol. I. p. 324.

Digitized by Google

form of the Three Estates? Was his final aim something similar to the attempt of '91? We do not believe this. Turgot did not approve of mixed governments. He was by no means confined in theory to the hereditary power of a single man, like his friends the physiocrats: but he desired the unity of the central power, whether monarchical or republican; a king, or an assembly; not a King or an elective executive power on one hand, and one or two assemblies on the other. He did not desire, at the summit of the State, that distinction of powers recommended by Montesquieu and Rousseau. Too confiding in human reason, he did not see, as we have already said, how difficult or rather impossible it is to reconcile this formidable confusion of the legislative and the executive powers with the liberty which he loved above every thing.

Had he been called upon to constitute a State *à priori*, his plan would not have been far removed from a unitary republic: but, in point of fact, he was the minister of a King; and this should not be forgotten. If he did not desire an assembly participating in the legislative power, by much greater reason he was averse to the idea of recalling the States-General. Should they return such as they had been, it would be a step backwards, a new sanction of the existence of the privileged orders, of the social order of the Middle Ages: should they become any thing different, it would be a revolution. He desired neither the one nor the other. He desired the abolition of privileges and the establishment of social unity by means of reform. He desired reform through royalty, and could desire nothing else. This is the significance of his name in history.[1]

From the moment that he was summoned to the comptroller-generalship, Turgot lost not a day, not an hour, in hastening the moment, so earnestly desired, when he could unveil his full thought to Louis XVI. He began by taking an account of the state of the receipts and expenditures. He found the gross revenue for 1775 amounting to three hundred and seventy-seven millions; the net revenue, the expenses deducted, to two hundred and thirteen and a half millions; the expenditures of the royal treasury, to two hundred and thirty-five millions; and the deficit,

[1] See *Mémoire au roi*, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. 502. J. Reynaud has summed up with great force and clearness the ideas and philosophical and political labors of Turgot, in the article TURGOT, of the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*. — See also the *Éloge de Turgot*, by H. Baudrillart; a conscientious study, written from the stand-point of the present economic school, and crowned by the French Academy.

Digitized by Google

to twenty-one and a half millions; which he did not hesitate to increase to thirty-six and a half millions by adding to the expenditures fifteen millions for the diminution of the arrears and debt due, which, since Terrai's bankruptcy, already amounted to two hundred and thirty-five millions.[1] At the same time, he abolished the office of banker to the King, thus burning his ships with respect to the revenue-farmers. He laid down the principle, that, save in case of absolute impossibility, all the expenditures should be made in ready money, thereby effecting a saving in commissions of six millions annually to the State. Louis seconded him by giving a sum from his privy purse to the treasury for the payment of one year's arrears of the pensions of the war-department, the marine, and the King's household. Louis seemed to seek to purify that purse, so often filled under his grandfather, with money wrung from the famine of the people.

September 13, 1774, a decree of the council reëstablished the entire freedom of the grain-trade within the kingdom; revoked the restrictive regulations[2] renewed by Terrai, December 23, 1770; abolished all purchasing and storing in behalf of the State and the municipalities, thus cutting short the operations of the association of the *Pact of Famine;* and encouraged the importation of foreign grain. The exposition of his motives, addressed to the public judgment by Turgot, was an eloquent manifesto in favor of commercial freedom. Among the motives alleged against the interference of the State in the grain-trade may be remarked the unequivocal acknowledgment of the possibility that the government might be unwittingly betrayed by its agents into *culpable manœuvres.* Turgot had been compelled, in the end, to believe in the existence of monopolies. The decree of the council of September 13, 1774, while signalizing the revival of the economic impulse arrested in 1770, did not exceed the bounds of prudence: the declaration of 1763 alone was reëstablished, and not that of 1764; and the King postponed the freedom of sale outside of the kingdom until circumstances should have become more favorable.

A few weeks after (November 2), letters-patent announced that the King reserved to himself the right of prescribing the regulations peculiar to the city of Paris. The harvest having again been

[1] *Comptes rendus des finances*, 1758–1787, p. 126, *et. seq.*; *Mercure historique*, t. CLXXVII. p. 407 (October, 1774).

[2] These regulations compelled the dealers in grain to register at the police-office their names, their residences, the places of their storehouses, and the contracts relative to their operations; and forbade the sale of grain outside the markets.

Digitized by Google

unsatisfactory, the danger was feared of the moral effect of immediately closing the public granaries in this city.

A ministerial letter of September 14 had apprised the farmers-general that no more *croupes* or favored shares in the profits of the farms would thenceforth be granted to persons outside of and useless to the administration. The place of farmer-general was in future to be given only to persons who had satisfactorily filled the higher posts in the farms for a number of years. The farmers were also apprised, that, in disputes relative to the taxes, the benefit of the doubt would be given to the tax-payers, contrary to the monstrous jurisprudence which the system of farming had brought into use. September 15, a decree of the council abolished the duty of eight sous per livre, added by Terrai in 1771 to all the royal and seigniorial toll-dues, and which was a source of intolerable vexation. Another decree, of September 25, annulled the lease of the farm of the domains, alienated for thirty years by Terrai to a few of his creatures, on conditions disastrous to the State, and equivalent to an absolute fraud. The indirect taxes were collected by the government, instead of being farmed out. The lease of the administration of the mortgages suffered the same fate.[1]

A great political question, raised by the very fact of the accession of Louis XVI., meanwhile was daily becoming more urgent, — the question of the magistracy. Scarcely had Turgot entered actively upon the comptroller-generalship, when the King found himself compelled to decide between the old parliaments and the Maupeou parliaments. The solution necessarily preceded the reopening of the courts after the judicial vacation. The King hesitated long, — a hesitation very excusable, it must be admitted. The solution was full of embarrassments and perils. Turgot, on his side, did not hesitate. From his youth, he had been opposed to the parliaments; and, convinced that the courts were wanting in their duty in suspending the course of justice, he had not feared to brave public opinion by sitting as master of requests in the *royal chamber* of 1753, during the exile of the parliament of Paris. He had always regarded the participation of the courts in politics and legislation as an evil and a source of anarchy; and absolutely refused to see therein a lawful guarantee against arbitrariness and fiscal oppression, — guarantees, as we have seen, which he designed to seek elsewhere. He proposed to transfer the registration of

[1] E. Daire, *Notice hist. sur Turgot*, ap. *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 89; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. passim; *Merc. historique*, t. CLXXVII. pp. 402, 595.

Digitized by Google

the laws and the right of remonstrance to the *great municipality of the kingdom*, and to reduce the superior courts to simple judicial functions. He was not only opposed in theory to the parliamentary pretensions; he was well acquainted with the stationary spirit of the ancient magistracy: he knew that their interests as land-holders had alone been able to render a portion of the magistrates favorable to the freedom of the grain-trade, but that in every other respect they were as much opposed to good as to evil, to reforms as to exactions, and that every innovation would have them for its adversaries. He contended energetically, therefore, against the reëstablishment of the old parliaments; and, by the strangest caprice of events, Turgot, Voltaire, the economists, and the most political among the philosophers, found themselves involuntarily in unison on this ground with the party of the clergy and the old courtiers of despotism, the aunts and the eldest of the King's brothers, and the remains of the cabal of D'Aiguillon and Du Barri. It is unnecessary to tell what a difference existed in the aim and the motives of these allies of a day.

The minister of foreign affairs, Vergennes, the partisan of absolute monarchy, then the eldest of the King's brothers, *Monsieur*, successively presented several memorials to the King, conjuring him not to disavow his grandfather's victory, and place the crown again under tutelage. The Queen, the young Count d'Artois, whom she governed at that time, the princes, and all the party of Choiseul at court, cast the weight of their influence in the opposite direction. They would not have succeeded in turning the scale had not the current of public opinion set the same way. There was a delicate distinction to be established between Maupeou and his work, the cause and the effect. These distinctions are seldom made by the public: it never has but a single idea at the same time, and does not separate the acts from the actors. The prevailing idea at that moment was a reaction against despotism. The parliaments had opposed despotism; therefore it was necessary to recall the parliaments. Calas, La Barre, the vendibility of office, the judges' fees, and so many other well-founded grievances, all were forgotten! It must be admitted that it would have been very difficult to retain the members of the new magistracy, who had fallen into such disrepute; and, if they were not retained, the question was how to replace them, the capable and honest members of the bar being for the most part pledged in honor to the old parliaments.

These practical difficulties, which will and perseverance would

Digitized by Google

have doubtless surmounted, had less influence upon the frivolous Mentor of Louis XVI. than the desire of being applauded at the Opera. When Maurepas was certain that the current of the day set in favor of the old magistracy, he followed the current. Louis XVI., against his instinct, followed Maurepas. This was the second great mistake of his reign.

Louis strove to reassure Turgot by repeating to him that he might count on his firm support, and strove to persuade himself that the parliaments were no longer to be feared, after the precautions which had been taken to curb them. The unconditional reëstablishment of the old tribunals was not, in fact, what Maurepas had advised. In conformity with a plan suggested by the keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, he had proposed to recall the former members, but to force upon them the régime of Maupeou, with little difference. Letters-patent, therefore, officially recalled from exile all the ex-members of the parliament of Paris, and requested them to appear at the Palais in their ceremonial robes on November 12, the day of the annual opening of the term. The King repaired thither in great state to hold a bed of justice, escorted by all the princes and peers, among whom was remarked Conti, who reappeared for the first time at court. Louis harangued the *returned* parliamentarians in harsh terms: —

"The King, my most honored lord and grandfather, . . . compelled by your resistance to his reiterated orders, did what the maintenance of his authority and the obligation to render justice to his subjects exacted of his wisdom. . . . I recall you to-day to the functions which you should never have quitted. Feel the value of my goodness, and never forget it."

He concluded by announcing that he wished to bury all the past in forgetfulness, but that he would never suffer derogation from the ordinance which was about to be read.

The keeper of the seals then read several edicts which reëstablished the former officers of the parliament of Paris; abolished the new posts; reëstablished the Great Council, and reorganized it from the members of the Maupeou parliament; abolished the superior councils, while increasing the former attributes of the presidial courts, in order to retain a part of the advantages which the creation of the superior councils had offered to those amenable to the tribunals; reëstablished the courts of aids at Paris and Clermont-Ferrand; reëstablished the community of attorneys, etc. These edicts were accompanied with the ordinance announced by the King, which regulated the discipline of the parliament. The

Digitized by Google

two chambers of requests, the usual hot-beds of the parliamentary storms, were abolished. The assemblies of the chambers could only be convoked by the decision of the Great Chamber, and at a time not interfering with the ordinary functions, which must never be interrupted. All interruption of functions, and all resignation of members in a body, would be considered as forfeiture of office, and would be judged under this name by the King, in *plenary court*, in the presence of the peers and his council: the Great Council, in this case, would, by full right, replace the rebellious parliament. The power of remonstrance was continued; but, in the case of a negative answer and of a registration effected in the presence of the King, nothing was to suspend the execution of the royal will.[1]

Vain precautions, vain restrictions! The spirit of fraternity is immutable, and never wearies of taking up the broken links of its traditions. It was quite certain that the parliament would recommence its enterprises. Already a smothered murmur had run through its seats during the reading of the disciplinary ordinance. The official orators, in replying to the King, had maintained all the previous positions; and the Duke de Chartres, eagerly seizing an occasion for popularity, had made a kind of protest when the keeper of the seals went through the formality of taking the voices. December 9, the parliament convoked the princes and peers for the purpose of deliberating on the remonstrances, which were voted in a second session by all present, except the King's brothers, the Count de La Marche, and six peers, among others the Archbishop of Paris. The Duke de La Rochefoucauld demanded the States-General, the place of which, he said, the court of peers had not the right to fill. On quitting the Palais, the Dukes of Orleans and Chartres, and the Prince de Conti, were greeted with the acclamations of the populace. The King's brothers were received with chilling silence. The Archbishop of Paris was hooted. Nevertheless, on the negative answer of the King, the parliament did not reiterate the remonstrances, but contented itself with placing upon its registers a protest against the form of the bed of justice, and against whatever might be introduced to the prejudice of the laws, maxims, and usages of the kingdom. The Prince de Conti himself advised it to stop at this; but Maurepas and Miromesnil were secretly wrought upon, and, nine months after the bed of justice, the ordinance which was *never to be derogated from* was already

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. pp. 43, 86.

Digitized by Google

impaired by the reëstablishment of the two chambers of requests.[1]

All the provincial courts, and the Châtelet of Paris, were successively reëstablished in the course of a year, to the great joy of the people, who saw in this only a victory of the spirit of liberty.[2] The restoration of the venerable La Chalotais to the head of the bar of Rennes, was, above all, a day of rejoicing, both to Brittany and to all France. The exile of this man, so justly popular, had ceased almost immediately after the accession of Louis XVI. Had the spirit of La Chalotais, indeed, been that of the parliaments, the public joy would have been wholly legitimate, and Turgot would not have refused to participate therein.

The foreboding of the obstacles which this return of the parliaments complicated in so formidable a manner only redoubled the energetic activity of Turgot. Several important measures followed each other from the end of 1774 to the spring of 1775. January 2, 1775, exemption from the duties of registration, the hundredth penny, franc-fief, and other dues, was granted to all leases of lands for twenty-nine years. A declaration of January 3, 1775, abolished proceedings against the principal inhabitants of parishes for the recovery of the villain-taxes, as being jointly responsible for their payment. This iniquitous joint responsibility, copied from the fiscal laws of the Roman empire, rendered a few farm-laborers, in better circumstances than the rest, responsible for the taxes of the whole parish in the provinces where the villain-tax was assessed on personal property, prevented them from ever knowing what they were to pay to the treasury, and annually ruined a great number of hard-working families. No law had probably been more detrimental to the progress of agriculture. Excellent provisions were made to arrest a murrain which was devastating the south. Vicq-d'Azyr, the most eminent of the disciples of Buffon, was appointed commissioner for the government. Various entry dues of the kingdom and of Paris, chiefly on the sea-fishery, were abolished, reduced, or equalized. The Hôtel-Dieu had the monopoly of the sale of meat during Lent: the freedom of this was granted to the ordinary dealers. Two chairs were instituted

[1] Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 155–158; *Merc. historique*, t. CLXXVII. p. 633, t. CLXXVIII. pp. 113, 226; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. pp. 119, 134.

[2] The parliament of Rouen had been reinstalled simultaneously with that of Paris: those of Rennes and Douai were reëstablished in December, 1774; those of Bordeaux and Toulouse, in February, 1775; that of Dijon, in March; that of Grenoble, in April; of Metz, in September; of Pau, in October. — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 43.

Digitized by Google

in the College of France, — one for the law of nature and of nations, the other for French literature. A clinical school was founded, under the inspiration of Vicq-d'Azyr. The Royal Society (Academy) of Medicine was authorized, despite the opposition of the spirit of routine of the old Faculty. In March, 1775, Turgot commissioned D'Alembert, the Abbé Bossut, the celebrated mathematician,[1] and a man destined to great renown, Condorcet, already perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences, to make theoretical and experimental investigations concerning the canal system of the kingdom.[2] The three commissioners, worthy of the minister, accepted the task only on condition that their services should be gratuitous. A decree of the council, of April 23, exempted foreign books from all duties.

The influence of Turgot made itself felt even in the matters most foreign to finance. The year before his accession to the ministry, he had addressed, as intendant, a memorial to the minister of war against the abuses of the militia system, which had just been modified since the fall of Choiseul. Turgot's idea was to organize provincial standing regiments, from which men should never be drafted, as was arbitrarily done with the militia, for the purpose of incorporating them into the active army; to make annual levies in all the parishes; and to leave the militiamen at home on half-pay, assembling them each year for a time sufficient to train them to discipline and the use of arms. This would have been a true army of reserve.[3] He permitted the employment of substitutes. An ordinance of December 1, 1774,

A chair of hydro-dynamics was founded for him in September, 1775. In March, 1776, the opening of a course of lectures on comparative anatomy, the most fruitful of the natural sciences, took place.

[2] A most admirable work, the prototype of all those artificial subterranean works now so numerous in France, had been recently commenced by the engineer Laurent. This was the subterranean Canal of St. Quentin, designed to unite the basins of the Somme and the Scheldt, and consequently (the Somme being already joined to the Oise by the Canal of La Fère) to put Paris in communication with the Netherlands. The subterranean canal was much larger in Laurent's plans than it was finally constructed: it was to be seven thousand toises in length. Laurent had formerly canalized the Somme, and rendered this river navigable through all the upper part of its course. — *Mém. secrets de Bachaumont*, t. VII. p. 281.

[3] *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 115. The prohibition of substitutes has often been demanded in the name of equality and civic duty. We believe that there is a confusion of terms in this. When the country is in danger, and the soil is invaded, every citizen owes his personal service; but, so long as the system of standing armies continues, to interdict the employment of substitutes for the ordinary service of these armies would have immense objections. The employment of substitutes is incompatible only with the principle of the national guard, the army of the nation.

Digitized by Google

without following the whole of Turgot's plan, took from it its best features. Thirty provincial regiments, formed by conscription from among all the unmarried men, and widowers without children, between the ages of eighteen and forty, numbered from sixty-six to sixty-seven thousand men. The term of service was six years. The employment of substitutes was authorized. All exemption from conscription of nobles, ecclesiastics, functionaries, and employés of every kind and rank, royal, seigniorial, and municipal, members of the bar and their clerks, physicians and surgeons, agriculturists, and certain categories of manufacturers and traders, was continued. The sons of the higher functionaries, and even the valets of nobles, churchmen, and other privileged persons, were exempt! That this audacious privilege was retained and sanctioned in the presence of Turgot's ministry, tells the whole story concerning the strength and depth of the social iniquities which were to be destroyed.[1]

Those who lived by these iniquities, those who were attached to abuses by interest or vanity, understood that an enemy was in power. The great projects of Turgot transpired. He already had against him the parliaments, who had not forgotten his opposition to their reëstablishment; the clergy, who were indignant at seeing philosophy invade the counsels of the crown; the farmers-general, who saw the dawn of the system of the direct administration of the taxes by the government, and the abolition of the excise duties; the courtiers, interested in the *croupes*[2] and other financial privileges about to be abolished; and the whole body of the courtiers and the officers of the King's household, who were in the enjoyment of the privileged pensions, sinecures, and perquisites, threatened with destruction. The whole ancient régime began to league together against the reformer, who had not even all the philosophical party in his favor, on account of the quarrel between the economists and a part of the encyclopedists. The latter loved and honored the minister, but did not support him unreservedly. The grain question was a cause of rupture. The dearness continued without reaching dearth, and smothered murmurs were agitating the country. On this subject, an attack on

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 87.

[2] We have the list of the *croupes* or shares in the profits of the farms granted to personages of the court by the last lease of the time of Louis XV. The Dauphiness (Marie-Antoinette), and Mesdames the daughters of Louis XV., are inscribed therein by the side of the girls of the Parc-aux-Cerfs! — See *Mém. sur l'administration de l'abbé Terrai*, p. 241.

Digitized by Google

Turgot came, not from the camp of the retrogressive party, but from one of the principal philosophical drawing-rooms of Paris. The brilliant sortie of Galiani against the physiocrats was repeated by another friend of philosophy, who shared the religious opinions of Rousseau and Turgot, but who, in political economy, had already taken his stand with éclat as the defender of the traditions of Colbert.

In the beginning of the spring of 1775, the banker Necker, the former champion of the Indian Company,[1] and the author of the *Eulogy of Colbert*, presented himself at the comptroller-generalship with a manuscript in his hand. This was a treatise upon the *Legislation on Grain*, based on different principles from those of the minister, and greatly lauded in advance in Paris. Necker came to invite Turgot to assure himself with his own eyes whether the book could be published without injury to the government. Turgot, with somewhat disdainful haughtiness, replied that the government *was afraid of nothing;* that the book, be it what it might, could appear; and that the public should be the judge. Necker withdrew with equal pride, and the book was published.[2]

The haughtiness was misplaced here. This was Turgot's fault, — a fault which proceeded from a conviction intolerant through force of energy and sincerity: nevertheless, this administration, disarming itself, and opening the lists to its adversaries in the presence of the judgment of public reason, presented a great spectacle and a great example.

Turgot had not to encounter a contemptible rival. Less witty and less ingenious than Galiani, Necker was more impassioned and more moving: his sentimental eloquence, though bordering at times on bombast and affectation, was well adapted to produce a lively impression. No common thinker would have relied for support upon the strongest feature of the past, the recollections of Colbert, while looking beyond the reforms announced by the economists, to predict the new ills that would mingle with the blessings of free trade, and protesting in the name of the lower classes, the

[1] Since the fall of the Indian Company, Necker had been engaged in extensive financial operations with the government. The following singular passage is found in a letter addressed to Necker by the bureaux under the Abbé Terrai: "We *supplicate* you to assist us in the course of the day. *Deign* to come to our aid. . . . We have recourse to your love for the reputation of the royal treasury." — Droz, *Histoire de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 216. We see from this incident, as M. Droz remarks, not only into what distress, but what *turpitude*, the government had fallen, at the very moment when it laid claim to a despotism more absolute than that of Louis XIV.

[2] *Mém. de Morellet*, t. I.

Digitized by Google

poor and the weak, against the abandonment of all interference of the State in economic phenomena. The ardor with which this book has been decried and celebrated, even in our day, suffices to attest its importance. With respect to grain, the whole science of political economy was at stake. Necker blamed Turgot less for what he did than for what he wished to do. The first part, which treated of exportation, expressed views which were often of great justice. He maintained therein, in opposition to the school of Quesnai, that population contributes more than wealth to the power of a State; that the constant and absolute freedom of the exportation of grain is not necessary to the progress of agriculture; and that the establishment of manufactures is the only means of raising the consumption to a level with the highest cultivation. He went so far as to affirm that the constant freedom to export grain is injurious to manufactures. He established a distinction between the interests of the owners of grain and the encouragement necessary to agriculture. He proclaimed the superiority of the interchange of national and foreign manufactures over that of grain. Turgot, carried away by physiocratic logic, had written somewhere,[1] that "the territory does not belong to the nation, but to the individual proprietors of the lands." Necker thought more justly, that the territory belongs both to the nation and to the landed proprietors; that there are two rights to be harmonized; and, consequently, that the right of the proprietor to dispose of the fruits of his land, and his land itself, is not unlimited.[2] It is the duty of the State, according to him, to protect the strong against the weak: now, "the strong man, in society, is the proprietor; the weak man is the man without property." Ere long, carried away in turn by his theory, he evoked glowing images, and raised up formidable problems. He compared the landed proprietors and the lower classes to lions and defenceless animals living together in a community. "It would seem as if a few men, after dividing the earth among themselves, made laws as a union and guarantee against the multitude, as they would have built up a barricade in the forest to defend themselves against wild beasts. Nevertheless, we dare affirm, that after having established laws of property, justice, and liberty, they have done almost nothing as yet for the most numerous class of

[1] *Lettre au docteur Price*, 1778; *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. II. p. 808.

[2] With respect to the disposal of the ground, an example may easily be cited: The State has a right to forbid the owner to sell his land to a foreigner; that is, to alienate a portion of the national soil to any one that is not a citizen.

Digitized by Google

citizens. 'Of what importance are your laws of property to us?' the latter might say: 'we possess nothing. Your laws of justice? — we have nothing to defend. Your laws of liberty? — if we do not work to-morrow, we shall die!'"

It would be easy to show how important these well-defined laws are to all. Necker, however, summed up his theory in less oratorical, more philosophical, and calmer language: "It is necessary, while granting to the prerogatives of property as much as possible, never to lose sight of the prior claims of humanity."

His practical conclusions relative to the grain question were to permit exportation only when grain was below a fixed price, which should be reëstablished every ten years; to prescribe that there should be a moderate supply in the hands of the bakers from the 1st of February to the 1st of June of each year, — that is, during the months when it was most liable to rise in price; to leave the internal commerce free so long as the price of grain was not half as high again as that at which exportation was prohibited; and, above this price, to forbid its sale outside of the markets, and to prohibit its purchase in the markets themselves for the purpose of storing. His objections against all internal free trade had not the same value as those against absolute free exportation, and the expedients proposed by him were more than questionable. His hostility to the grain merchants was without foundation: the interference of the grain merchants, in a normal state of affairs, does not, in general, make provisions dearer, but equalizes the price.[1]

In short, Necker, like Galiani, was right in disputing economical absoluteness. Dangerous hyperboles have been censured in his book; and, even in his time, one of the partisans of Turgot, the illustrious Condorcet, replied to him, that it was not the liberty of the land-owner, but the monopoly of the privileged trader, which oppressed the non-landowner.[2] It is certain, that, of the two, the greater oppressor was the monopolizer; which did not prove Necker wholly in the wrong. The inequality of property was much greater then than now, and the legislation which we owe to the movement of '89 had not yet diminished

[1] See Necker, *de la Législation des grains*, ap. *Mélanges économiques*, t. I. collect. Guillaumin.

[2] Condorcet, *Lettre sur le commerce des grains*; ap. *Mélanges économiques*, t. II. p. 491. "It is," he says, "the abuse of credit, privilege, and arbitrariness, and not the right of property, that constitutes the fatal power of the rich against the poor. The question is to secure this same right of property to the poor."

Digitized by Google

the force of the accumulation of property. Necker's injustice consisted in imputing to his adversaries a pretended absolute denial of the duties of the State. These men, who wished to organize public instruction on an immense scale, did not deny social duty; but they knew that the best, the only means of freeing the lower classes from wretchedness is to free them from ignorance and vice, and that the first of all economic laws is a good law of instruction. Neither did Turgot and his friends deny, as we have already said, and are about again to show, that the State should labor to relieve the poor in hard times; but they designed to reconcile this interference with liberty. In Necker, it must be confessed, the protest in behalf of the lower classes did not go beyond sentiment: he had no general plan for their protection; for it was not a plan to invoke the traditions of Colbert,— traditions which Colbert himself, could he have revived, would have thoroughly transformed.

In Turgot, behind every idea, there was an act: in Necker, the idea knew not how to take form. The one in power was a great statesman: the other would be only an able financier, and, when he attempted any thing beyond combinations of credit, would only resume a few fragments, here and there, of the plan of his predecessor.

The time, meanwhile, had come for thought to emerge from the sphere of generalities: the questions that had been agitated in books were beginning to make themselves felt among men; the era of peaceful discussion was about to close. At the moment of the appearance of Necker's book, seditious murmurs were heard on every side.

The dearness had increased towards spring, as is always the case in bad seasons. The irritation of the suffering classes was in proportion to the very hopes which had been given by the new reign. The people paid little heed to the obstacles opposed by Nature to the good intentions of the government. April 18, a mob of peasants invaded the town of Dijon; attacked the house of a parliamentary counsellor, Maupeou, well known for his connection with the *Pact of Famine;* sacked every thing, without pillaging any thing; and sought to kill the governor, M. de La Tour-du-Pin, who, it was said, had exasperated them by a speech as insane as barbarous. On being told by the peasants that they had not wherewithal to buy bread, — "My friends," he answered, "the grass is beginning to shoot: go and browse." The Bishop

Digitized by Google

of Dijon succeeded at last in calming the exasperated crowd, and arresting the disorder.[1]

At the news of the disturbances in Brittany, Turgot caused the *octroi* and market dues on grain and flour to be suspended in the towns of Dijon, Beaune, Saint-Jean-de-Lône, and Montbard, in consideration of an indemnity to the proprietors of these duties. It was only the beginning of a series of analogous measures, which, from April 22 to June 3, ended in the abolition or the very great reduction of all duties of this kind throughout France, except at Paris, which remained temporarily subject to a special régime. This was one of the best means of lowering the price of grain. April 24, another decree of the council granted premiums for the introduction of foreign grain. It is seen from this decree that the government increased the public works in all the provinces where the necessities were urgent; and that workshops for weaving, knitting, etc., were established at Paris, where men, women, and children were employed. The government cannot, therefore, be reproached with inaction. As early as before the decree of April 25, Turgot had furnished funds to merchants for the importation of grain by the way of Havre.[2]

The agitation meanwhile continued, and assumed a character, in the provinces around Paris which serve as its granaries, wholly different from the riot of Dijon, — a riot easily explained by ordinary causes. In Brie, Soissonnais, Upper Normandy, and Vexin, bands of sinister-looking men scoured the country, inciting the populace to insurrection, forcing the farmers to sell grain at a low price, attacking the markets of the towns, and moving from point to point along the Seine, as if following a signal, and as if their principal aim was to prevent the foreign grain landed at Havre from reaching Paris. It appears certain that barns were burned and the grain thrown into the river by men who were crying famine! May 1, the bands pillaged the market of Pontoise; May 2, they effected their entrance into the court-yard of the château of Versailles itself! The King appeared on the balcony, and addressed them. They refused to listen. He became agitated, and caused it to be proclaimed that the price of bread should be fixed at two

[1] Letter from Dijon, quoted in the *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur l'adminis. de Terrai*, p. 256.

[2] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. pp. 151, 155; *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur l'administ. de Terrai*, p. 257. In the preamble of the decree of April 24, the ministry explained why bread was dear; upon which, malicious persons did not fail to say that it approved of the dearness.

Digitized by Google

sous a pound. The vociferations ceased, and the tumult was dispelled; but the bands publicly announced that they should go the next day to Paris.

Turgot hastened from Paris, in despair at a weakness which threatened to render any plan of administration impossible. He forced the King in some sort to retract the concession made to the mob, and to authorize him to prohibit all persons from exacting bread from the bakers below the market price; but Louis at least insisted on forbidding the troops to fire. Meanwhile, the bands entered Paris (May 3). The markets were guarded; but this was not the case with the shops of the bakers, which were pillaged by the rioters at their leisure, in the presence of an immense multitude, less accomplices than spectators. The police showed more than weakness: the lieutenant-general of police, Lenoir, like the minister Sartine, whom he had succeeded, was extremely hostile to Turgot's system, and very desirous of witnessing its failure. The energy of Turgot equalled the occasion. He demanded the immediate removal of the lieutenant-general of police. May 4, the bakers' shops were occupied by a military force: the movements of the troops drove away the curious spectators; and the sedition, reduced to its real strength, dared attempt nothing more at Paris. The parliament, meanwhile, had assembled, in spite of a letter from the King forbidding it to meet as a body during these disturbances, the cognizance of which the council attributed to the Tournelle, and issued a decree, claiming the jurisdiction of the affair for the Great Chamber, and entreating the King to lower the price of grain to a rate proportioned to the necessities of the people. Such a decree, placarded opposite the royal ordinance maintaining the market price of bread, was, if not a great act of perfidy, at least very perilous. If Paris was tranquillized, the disorder was redoubled in the rural districts and the small towns; and several large cities, Lille, Amiens, and Auxerre, had been a prey to the same disturbances as the capital, and on the same day.[1] The rumor of the imprudent concession granted by the King at Versailles spread with the rapidity of lightning. A great number of forged decrees of the council, confirmatory of the King's promise, were circulated, of which the populace took advantage to exact bread, flour, and grain at a low price: at the same time, the bandits continued to burst the sacks of flour, and to attack the boats on the rivers; and unknown agents secretly induced

[1] The south also had its riots about the same epoch.

Digitized by Google

the principal holders of grain to conceal instead of selling it, in the expectation of a further increase of price.

The council adopted all the resolutions dictated by Turgot. The distribution of the decree of the parliament was stopped, and the plates were broken at the printers. A small army of twenty-five thousand men was put on a war footing, and occupied the capital, the Isle of France, and especially the course of the rivers. This was commanded by a marshal of France (Biron), under the superior direction of the comptroller-general, appointed *minister of war in this matter*. A royal ordinance prohibited all men, under penalty of death, from collecting together, forcing the houses of the bakers or the grain and flour stores, and compelling the holders to give them grain and flour below the market price; and announced that orders had been given to the troops to fire in case of violence, and that the offenders would be tried before the prevotal court,— rigorous measures, which Louis XVI. did not sign without a kind of dismay.[1] May 5, the parliament was summoned to Versailles for a bed of justice. The keeper of the seals explained to the parliament the motives which induced the King to charge a summary jurisdiction, a jurisdiction of war, with the repression of the disturbances: "When the first disturbances are entirely appeased, the King will leave to his courts and ordinary tribunals, as soon as he deems proper, the care of discovering the real culprits; *those who may have given rise, by secret intrigues, to the excesses*, which, at this moment, it must be thought only of quelling."

When the keeper of the seals went through the formality of taking the votes, the Prince de Conti and a parliamentary counsellor alone dared manifest their opposition. The King dismissed the assembly, forbidding it to make any remonstrances. "I rely on your putting no obstacle or delay in the way of the measures which I have taken, *in order that no event like those of the past may take place in the course of my reign!*"

The parliament felt the consequences that would ensue from its resistance in such a juncture, and dared not incur the responsibility of them. By interfering inopportunely in the question of fixing the price of bread, it had deprived itself of the possibility of defending its legitimate ground, the ordinary course of justice, against an exceptional jurisdiction. It was not sorry, at heart, to see the unpopular task of repression thrown on others: it protested only in order to save appearances, and remained tranquil while

1 His Majesty said to M. Turgot on going out, "At least, have we nothing for which to reproach ourselves?"— *Relation* appended to *Mém. sur Terrai*, p. 264.

Digitized by Google

the minister acted.[1] The energetic measures employed by Turgot were completely successful: the riot nowhere become an insurrection, the rioters did not attempt to make any serious stand against the troops, and the security of the highways and markets was reëstablished. The agents of the administration had secretly informed the large farmers that it did not design to fix the price of their grain arbitrarily, but that they must keep the markets stocked, and not exact exorbitant prices. The arrival of foreign grain, besides, began naturally to arrest the rise.[2] The news of the imprisonment of two of the principal agents of the *Pact of Famine*, as the presumed movers of the sedition, also contributed to win the favor of public opinion. Many men of divers conditions had been arrested, among others several country curés, who had declaimed in the pulpit against the comptroller-general. It was thought necessary to make examples. May 11, two of the actors in the riot of the 3d were hung on the Grève by the order of the prevotal commission of Paris, — a journeyman gauze-maker and a peruke-maker, who, without being innocent, were not more guilty than many others, and who could not be considered as belonging to the number of those *plotters* denounced by the keeper of the seals. Their death may be styled the first application, by the progressive party, of that *salutary rigor*, and those *necessities of the public safety*, of which such a terrible abuse was afterwards made. This is, perhaps, the only reproach which can justly be made to Turgot.

The capital punishments, at least, went no farther. On the same day of the execution of these unfortunates, an amnesty, which excepted only the leaders and instigators, reassured the peasants, who had taken refuge by crowds in the forests, and guaranteed them against all ulterior prosecution, on condition of returning peaceably to their parishes, and restoring in money or kind the real value of the grain and flour pillaged or extorted below the market price.[3] At the same time, the council addressed to the curés, through the medium of the bishops, a circular, to be read and commented upon from the sacred desk. This was at

[1] The parliament, meanwhile, displayed an unexpected monarchical zeal: it ordered two pamphlets against absolute power, in which the principles of the *Social Contract* were blended with those of the *Parliamentary Remonstrances*, to be burned (June 30). The parliament pretended that it did not belong to writers to treat of these matters. — Droz, t. I. p. 171.

[2] The ministry expended ten millions therein.

[3] Indemnities had already been allowed the pillaged proprietors by the government.

Digitized by Google

once an exposition of the causes which naturally raise and lower the price of grain, and a manifesto against the authors of the plot formed to famish Paris and the neighboring provinces. The ministry affirmed in this document that the sedition had not been occasioned by the real scarcity of grain, of which there had always been a sufficient quantity in the markets; that neither had it been produced by excessive want; and that provisions had been seen much higher in price,[1] without occasioning the slightest murmur. His Majesty had neither the power nor the will to lower the price of provisions at his pleasure: this price was entirely dependent on their scarcity or abundance. . . . The wisdom of the government might render the dearness less rigorous by facilitating the importation of foreign grain; by permitting the free transit, throughout the kingdom, of indigenous grain; by rendering the means of subsistence more nearly equal to the necessities by facilitating the transportation and sale; by giving to the destitute; and by increasing in their behalf all the resources of an industrious charity: but all these precautions could not prevent the recurrence of high prices, . . . the necessary consequence of bad harvests. *When the people know who were the authors of the sedition*, it was said in conclusion, *it will see them with horror.*

This phrase, which seemed to announce that the storm was about to burst on culprits high in rank, did not belong to Turgot, but to the Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, an innovating and ambitious prelate, who had been intrusted with the revision of the circular, and who made a great noise in the hope of arriving at the council.

The circular was ill received by the clergy, who were angry that a *philosopher* like Turgot should interfere with prescribing to them their duties. Many censured the government for having denounced a plot which was not proved. In fact, Saurin and Doumercq, the two agents of the royal monopoly of grain under Louis XV. and Terrai, who had been arrested, succeeded in exculpating themselves; a president of the ex-superior council of Rouen (a Maupeou parliament), likewise imprisoned, was also released; the curés arrested were acquitted with a few months' imprisonment; and the renowned sentence of the circular "remained an idle threat," says the historian of Louis XVI., "either because the disturbances had no secret instigator, because it was impossible to collect sufficient proof against the criminals, *or be-*

[1] Grain had been much dearer in the time of Terrai and the *Pact of Famine.*

Digitized by Google

cause Louis XVI. did not permit their publication."[1] It is certain that Turgot was convinced of the existence of a conspiracy plotted by the Prince de Conti and certain members of the parliament. Conti, that philosopher-prince, and adversary of despotism, deplorably ended a career, which had been honorable at moments, by putting himself at the head of all the cabals in opposition to the philosophy which had arrived at power under other auspices than his own. Many suspicions were also raised against the minister, Sartine. It cannot be doubted that there had been, if not a formal and organized plot, at least a treacherously systematic propagation of all the rumors that could act as incitements to sedition, and that money had been liberally expended to encourage it.[2] There was in this *Flour War*, as these disturbances were styled, a monstrous coalition of opposing elements: the agents and the victims of the Pact of Famine acted in concert; the passions of the populace mingled with the most retrogressive passions; and a blind and violent faction of the people served the partisans of the monopoly and despotism which they thought themselves combating, against the friend of the people. They fancied that the monopoly was still at Versailles, as in the times of Louis XV. From this idea proceeded those furious placards, posted even in the Tuileries, inciting the populace to burn Versailles. The insane defenders of the old abuses and the old régime smiled instead of trembling: they saw in it only an embarrassment to their adversary, a means of overthrowing Turgot![3]

Turgot did not fall. Material order was reëstablished; but this was not enough. The middle classes had taken these grave incidents lightly: influenced indirectly by the aristocracy, their natural adversary, and by the fraction of the encyclopedists, who, with very little political intelligence, grouped around Turgot in opposition to Necker, they did not give the government all the moral support which it had a right to expect from them. The

[1] Droz, t. I. p. 167. Farther on, p. 168, this conscientious historian decides fully to admit that "men in power incited the disturbances."

[2] The following incident is among those best vouched for: During the session of the parliament, on the 4th of May, a counsellor related, that, seeing a woman more excited than the rest during the tumult of the night before, he had urged her to retire from the fray, offering her a crown to buy bread; upon which the fury answered him ironically, clinking her pocket, "Begone! we do not need your money: we have more than you!" — *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur Terrai*, p. 265.

[3] Concerning the *Flour War*, see the *Relation* appended to the *Mém. sur l'administ. de Terrai; Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXIX. p. 48, *et seq.*; *Journal des Économistes*, t. X. p. 279; *Soulavie, Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III.; Droz, t. I. p. 164, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

revenue-farmers, who had sent so many thousand wretches to the galleys or the scaffold for the crime of smuggling, audaciously clamored against Turgot's *barbarity*. Pamphlets, caricatures, and ballads multiplied, and were received by the public, if not with decided favor, at least with too much indulgence. Voltaire showed admirable good sense and energy. He, who had lately ridiculed the exaggerations and eccentricities of the economists, did not hesitate for an instant to acknowledge that here their cause was that of philosophy and progress, and gloriously purified himself from his connivance with Maupeou and Du Barri[1] by the devoted coöperation which he gave to Turgot. Already, in the ingenious allegory of the *Voyage of Reason*, the memorial of a fleeting alliance between the European monarchies and philosophy, he had congratulated the French government on meriting in its turn the praises due to its brethren, the late Pope at the head: it is true that this was the Pope that had abolished the order of the Jesuits. Two more of his writings, immediately accosting the question of the day, the free transit of grain within the kingdom, diffused over these grave, economic subjects all the grace and piquancy of inimitable talent, and indirectly refuted Necker, and directly a dangerous ally of Necker, — the advocate Linguet, the incarnation of paradox; the apologist of Tiberius, of Nero, of slavery, of the Jesuits, and of pure despotism; the sole protector, according to him, of the poor against the oppression of the rich; an easy writer, who was not without vigor, and who was misled by the love of noise and the pursuit of a false originality. Voltaire, according to his custom, touched on every thing relating to the times; and the second of his two writings, the *Diatribe in the Style of the Author of the Ephemerides*, was suppressed by decree of the council, August 19, on account of certain passages concerning the part played by the clergy in the late disturbances. Turgot entreated Voltaire to moderate the expression of his sympathies, for the interest of the cause. The old man, nevertheless, continued to celebrate the political Messiah of philosophy, and to labor to convert hesitating minds to his side.[2]

[1] A connivance, the motives of which were perfectly disinterested, it must not be forgotten.

[2] See the *Ode on the Past and Present*:—

> Contemplate the brilliant dawn
> Which at last announces happy days.
> A new world is about to break forth:
> Até disappears forever.
> Behold august Philosophy,

Digitized by Google

Every day, some new incident showed more clearly how far the least progress would be disputed. The period of the coronation arrived (July 11, 1775). For reasons of economy, Turgot would have gladly caused this ceremony to be celebrated at Paris. The coronation at Rheims involved an expenditure of eight millions. Tradition prevailed: the rights of Rheims were maintained. Turgot strove — a thing more important — to cause the coronation oath to be modified, and the two formulas, the one ancient, the other modern, by which the King pledged himself to *exterminate* heretics, and to maintain the capital penalty against duellists, to be suppressed. Maurepas dissuaded the King from this innovation, and Louis XVI. dared not follow Turgot's advice.[1] It is said, that, at the moment of pronouncing the barbarous oath of the Middle Ages, Louis became confused, and stammered unintelligible words. Unhappy prince, incapable of clearly deciding which side to take in the conflict between the past and the future!

It was the clergy, on the contrary, that modified the coronation oath, and deprived it of all that could be accepted by the modern spirit! While the recollections of the Frankish kings and the feudal kings, the Holy Ampulla of Clovis, the crown and sword of Charlemagne, and the peers of Hugues Capet and Philippe-Auguste, were once more exhumed in the presence of the eighteenth century, the people were expelled from the place preserved for them by tradition in the ritual, as a protest which prevented the primordial right from falling into disuse. The officiating prelate (the coadjutor of the Archbishop of Rheims) suppressed the question to the people, "Will you take N—— for your King?" The men of the past themselves destroyed the compromise between divine right and national sovereignty which was concealed in the antique ceremonial.[2]

On his return from the coronation, Turgot addressed to the King an excellent memorial on *tolerance*, in which he affirmed

> So long pursued within thy bounds,
> Dictating its triumphant laws!
> Truth comes with it, etc.
> ... What gods diffuse these blessings?
> A single man! yet the vulgar
> Disregard the good that he has done!

[1] Turgot, as regarded the coronation, was successful only in the economic question. Instead of causing Rheims to be supplied by the government, he left the task of provisioning it to free trade, contenting himself with suspending the *octrois* of the city. There was an abundance of every thing.

[2] Droz, t. I. p. 171; *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. I.; *Notice hist.*, p. c.; *Relation du sacre*, ap. *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXIX. p. 78, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

that it is a duty not to keep criminal engagements; and demanded the liberty of worship in the name of reasons of State, natural right, and true religious principle.[1]

Meanwhile, the assembly of the clergy, in session from July to September, 1775, petitioned that the work of Louis the Great and *Louis the Well-beloved* should be completed; that the meetings of the Protestants, tolerated by a fatal laxity, should be dispersed; that they should be excluded from all public functions; and that the celebration of their marriages and the instruction of their children should be interdicted. The clergy complained that children were left to their mothers, which it called "*ravishing* tender infants from the ministers of our holy religion." Upon the protests of the mendicant orders, who complained of seeing their novitiates deserted, it petitioned that the monastic vows, deferred to the age of twenty-one by the ordinance of 1768, should be authorized at sixteen, as before. Lastly, in its anger with the age, after condemning a great number of philosophic publications, it declared that "monstrous Atheism had become the prevailing opinion."[2]

These mournful complaints of the spirit of persecution were carried to the King by the Archbishop of Vienne, the brother of the poet Lefranc de Pompignan, and his ally in the war against Voltaire. This prelate, who was sincere in his intolerance, had as acolytes the Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, the minister in expectancy, and a young prelate destined to become far more famous, — the Abbé de TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD; two churchmen, who, at the most, believed in God, but who, at all events, had endeavored to oppose in private the resolutions which they were obliged to sustain officially.

This retrogressive assembly had nevertheless refused to authorize the feast of the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, which the ex-Jesuits were striving to introduce through the secret society of the *Cordicoles*. This was a concession to the anti-Jesuitical spirit of the parliament, which responded to the advances of the clergy by condemning to the flames the *Diatribe in the Style of the Author of the Ephemerides*, already prohibited by the council. The advocate-general Séguier proclaimed, in his address to the court, the close alliance between the magistracy and the clergy. The two old adversaries united against the common enemy.[3]

[1] *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 492.

[2] Droz, t. I. p. 182; Bachaumont, t. VIII. pp. 269–312.

[3] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. VIII. p. 241; Droz, t. I. p. 183; E. Daire, *Introduction aux Œuvres de Turgot*, p. xcix.

Digitized by Google

Other remonstrances, conceived in a very different spirit, had been presented to the King before those of the clergy (May 6, 1775). These were the remonstrances of the court of aids, which have so justly remained celebrated as the most instructive historical document that emanated from the body of the magistracy. The court of aids, or rather its first president, the excellent Malesherbes, seized the occasion of a few observations on the conditions of its reëstablishment to draw a complete picture of the system of taxation which was oppressing France, and the frightful abuses which resulted from it. The King was enabled to embrace every thing at a glance, the past and the present. In these remonstrances are seen those thrilling and often-quoted details concerning the tax on salt; on that gift "which would be one of the most precious bestowed by Nature upon France, did not the hand of the financier constantly repulse this boon which the sea unceasingly casts upon our shores. . . . There are places where the clerks of the farmers assemble the peasants at certain seasons of the year for the purpose of again submerging the salt which the waves have deposited on the strand." In these remonstrances also appears unveiled the demoralization caused by the system of internal custom duties and unequal taxes, a demoralization of which fearful traces remain. The author shows the people accustomed to regard smuggling, that is, defrauding the State, as a venial offence.[1] "There are whole provinces in which children are brought up to it by their fathers, having never learned any other trade, and knowing no other means of subsistence." And this with the galleys, and even the gibbet, in perspective! The farmers-general combated this species of corruption by another still worse: they secretly bribed the wife to inform against the husband, and the son against the father. They had obtained provisions which made accusation almost equivalent to condemnation: it was not necessary to prove the offence; the official report of the clerks being admitted as evidence, the accused was called upon to prove his innocence; and Heaven knows what faith could be put in clerks interested in finding every one guilty.[2] In most cases, the accused had but a

[1] Witness the kind of popularity of Mandrin, the smuggler-hero.

[2] See in the *Recueil de la cour des aides*, p. 485, *et seq.*, the story of Monnerat, suspected of smuggling (he had been mistaken for another), who was arrested, and buried in a subterranean dungeon for six weeks, without form of justice, loaded with irons, and fed on bread and water, then kept for twenty months in another prison. The error was perceived, and he was set at liberty; upon which he obtained damages from the court of aids against the lessee of the farm. The council of State called up and

Digitized by Google

single judge, the greater part of the cases concerning the taxes having been taken from the special tribunals, and referred to the intendant of the generality, and from him, in case of appeal, to the council of finance, that is, to an intendant of finance; since the comptroller-general, who composed the council with this intendant, could not enter into the details of the affairs in litigation. Even when there was no evocation, the appeals from the tribunals still ended in this single judge from the council of finance. To have but a single judge *is to have no judge*, —to be judged arbitrarily. The concession made to the court of aids in 1767, by the abolition of extraordinary commissions, had been, therefore, almost entirely illusory.

The insolent tyranny which the farmer-general and all his employés, even to the lowest, exercised over the laboring masses, and over all who were not privileged or protected, reposed upon an unknown code, a vast chaos of regulations which had never been collected together, and which were accessible to the financiers alone. The tax-payer never knew what he ought to pay; the farmer-general often knew no better what he ought to exact: but it had become customary in jurisprudence always to interpret the doubt in favor of the latter. "The common people are daily obliged to endure the caprices, disdain, and even insults, of the agents of the farmer-general." They were wholly at the mercy of fiscal tyrants, as they had formerly been at that of feudal tyrants.

How can we be astonished at the traditional hatred which to this day pursues every thing that pertains to the indirect taxes?

"Whole branches of the administration are founded on systems of injustice, from which no recourse, either to the public or to superior authority, is possible." Neither was there more clearness and equity where the direct taxes were concerned. The *corvée*, for example, had been established by no law, not even by a printed decree of the council! Not only had the King attributed to himself the exclusive and absolute right of making laws, but now taxes were sometimes levied even without a law of the King. The twentieth had, indeed, been established by edicts; but the lists were secret, and it was impossible for private individuals to consult them. The court of aids, in 1756, had obtained the publication of these lists; but the late King had been induced by the ministers to revoke this concession. As to the villain-tax and its accessories, the lists could not be

dismissed the case, and quashed the decrees by which the court of aids endeavored to maintain its jurisdiction and to do justice. This is one instance among a thousand.

Digitized by Google

secret; but no means existed, either for communities or private individuals, to discuss or protest against them in advance. No one was informed of what he owed until the moment of payment. The court of aids, in 1768, had ordered each fiscal election district to send it an annual statement of the villain-taxes. The council quashed the decree of the court. All guarantees were swallowed up one after another in a vast quagmire of arbitrary power. The *élus* (assessors) charged with the department of the villain-taxes had formerly been delegates from the people, as was indicated by their name: they had been made royal officers; then had been presided over by the intendant of the generality; then the sole power of decision had been given to the intendant, the *élus* being reduced to the simple right of deliberating without voting, and the sovereign courts had received a prohibition to interfere in questions concerning the assessment of the taxes; then, lastly, in 1767, the *élus* were deprived of the cognizance of whatever concerned the accessories of the villain-tax; that is, the variable part of the tax, — a part almost equal to the principal, which remained stationary; the intendant not only decreeing alone, but having the sole cognizance thenceforth with respect to the accessories of the villain-tax, and also to the abatements and remissions.

The court of aids did not discuss the limits of the rights of the crown, as the parliaments had continually done: it laid aside all political metaphysics,[1] and concentrated its attack, in order to render it irresistible. The enemy with which it grappled in close combat was *bureaucratic*[2] despotism, — was the clandestine, impersonal, and irresponsible power of the clerks. In a large majority of the cases which interested the greater part of the citizens, it was not, in fact, the minister, or even the intendant, but an obscure inferior, who decided with full sovereignty, under cover of the signature of his superior. The court of aids

[1] A passage of very acute and remarkable discernment must nevertheless be cited. The writer draws a comparison between France and the countries of Oriental despotism in which there are neither laws nor organized bodies, and also the countries where the prerogatives of the prince and the nation have been respectively fixed. "In France," he says, "the nation has always had a profound feeling of its rights and liberty: our maxims have been more than once recognized by our kings, who have even boasted of being the sovereigns of a free people. Nevertheless, the code of this liberty has never been written." — *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé à la cour des aides*, etc.; Brussels, 1779, p. 652. Institutions and official facts do not, indeed, constitute the whole of history, but also manners and ideas. This must not, above all, be forgotten in the history of France; for we are the least *formal* of nations.

[2] The term is *barbarous*, but expressive, and we can find no equivalent for it.

Digitized by Google

vehemently attacked this arbitrary and clandestine system, followed perseveringly by the administration for the purpose of depriving all ranks of the people of the means of reaching the ear of the Prince, — this system which had caused the disappearance, throughout nearly all France, of all general or local representation; which had gone so far as to despoil corporations and communities of the right of managing their own affairs; and which had reached such a *puerile excess* of universal concentration as to "declare the deliberations of the inhabitants of a village null and void, when they had not been authorized by the intendant: so that, if this community wished to make any expenditure, however trifling it might be, it was necessary to obtain the consent of the sub-delegate of the intendant."

After seventy years of revolution, the communes are not yet freed; but we see at least what is to be thought of the reproach so often made to the Revolution,[1] of having crushed the communal liberties.

In assailing everywhere the system of clandestineness, the court of aids could not fail to encounter the *lettres de cachet*. It would have gladly demanded their entire abolition: it at least petitioned that men arrested by extraordinary proceedings should be given the means of arguing their innocence, with an indemnity if they were found innocent; and that every extraordinary writ of arrest should be reëxamined by special magistrates.

The *Remonstrances* endeavored everywhere to point out the remedy by the side of the evil. The duties and taxes should be simplified: "Simple laws are the only good laws." The farmers-general should be ordered to publish exact tariffs, and a brief and clear collection of the regulations. The right of appointing representatives to sit in the department of taxes with the intendant and the existing *élus* should be restored to the people, and every thing relating to the direct taxes should be referred to this assembly. The capitation-tax should be abolished, or its arbitrary nature wholly changed.[2] A period should be fixed for the expiration of the twentieth, greatly increased under the Abbé

[1] That administrative centralization, with all its abuses, is of monarchical, instead of revolutionary origin, is the conclusion that arises from an attentive study of the ancient régime. M. de Tocqueville has rendered us the service of placing this truth above discussion, and within the comprehension of all, by collecting and concentrating the proofs of it in a decisive work, *l'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, the last effort of a noble intellect which death was about to snatch from us.

[2] The nobles and all the privileged persons in the provinces had found means of reducing their capitation-tax to an excessively moderate rate, while that of those subject

Digitized by Google

Terrai: meanwhile the nature of this tax should be changed by a terrier which should be made. There should be no more taxes, the sum total of which had not been fixed in advance. Private individuals should be required to pay their proportional share of a fixed sum, and not a fixed portion of their revenue, making a part of an indefinite total.[1]

The court of aids concluded by demanding that every part of the administration should be made public. "It is the unanimous wish of the nation to obtain the States-General, or at least the Provincial Estates." It was necessary to begin by causing deputies to be sent to the King from all the provinces, for all their affairs in general, as was already done for the special interests of commerce; and to be able publicly to have recourse to the council or the minister against the intendants, as to sovereign courts against the lower tribunals.[2]

Malesherbes' conclusions differed from those of Turgot, since he demanded the States-General; and his plan of reform was much less extensive and less profound than that of the comptroller-general: but the official presentation in the name of a sovereign court gave it great weight; and the general impression made by the *Remonstrances*, despite certain divergences on various points, was very favorable to the plans of Turgot. The comptroller-general himself had urged the first president of the court of aids to hasten his work; and both were agreed in endeavoring to secure the appointment of a commission of magistrates and administrators to examine the *Remonstrances*, and to seek practical means of reform. This commission would have been the essential instrument of Turgot.

The aged Maurepas was conscious of this. The increased authority of Turgot was beginning, if not to disquiet, at least to annoy him. The harsh and gloomy picture drawn by Malesherbes startled him. He was unwilling to permit the gov-

to the villain-tax amounted to nearly as much as the principal of this tax. — *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 258.

[1] That is, there should be nothing but apportioned taxes, and no quota-tax.

[2] *Mém. pour servir à l'hist. du Droit public*, etc., or *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé en la cour des aides, de* 1756 *à* 1775, pp. 628–693. There are many judicious observations in this document, apart from its special object. The writer shows, for instance, that one of the causes which checked the growth of the prosperity and greatness of France was, that it was more profitable among us to be a clerk, or even a smuggler, than a soldier; an officer of finance, than an agriculturist; a trader, than a manufacturer. Forbonnais had affirmed the same thing, and had given statistics showing that the financier earned three times as much as the manufacturer.

Digitized by Google

ernment to pledge itself thoroughly to any thing. He thought only of stifling the *Remonstrances* and the plan of the commission; and caused the King to reply, that the necessary reform of all matters susceptible of reformation would be, not the work of a moment, but the labor of his whole reign; and the keeper of the seals, that, if *abuses really existed*, they should not be made known until the moment of correcting them, and that the court of aids must not therefore be astonished at the extraordinary means taken to prevent the publication of its *Remonstrances*. These means consisted in abstracting the minutes from the registers of the court (May 30, 1775). Maurepas did not gain much thereby; for the document which he sought to suppress was printed secretly, a few weeks afterwards, without the knowledge of Malesherbes.[1]

The presentation of the *Remonstrances* was the last important act of Malesherbes as the first president of the court of aids. Maurepas had at last perceived the impossibility of longer sustaining against universal contempt his brother-in-law, the aged La Vrillière, the disgraceful relic of a disgraceful régime. The Queen, instigated by her familiars, who were ambitious for her, strove to introduce some one of her protégés into the cabinet in the place of La Vrillière. Maurepas feared above every thing lest the Queen should gain influence: he went over to the side of Turgot, and caused the author of the *Remonstrances* himself to be appointed to the ministry of the King's household. Malesherbes twice refused, and did not consent to the change until Turgot had made acceptance a positive duty to him by representing that the spirit of frivolity and dissipation was about to invade the place which he refused, with the circle of the Queen, and that the cause of reform would be lost (the middle of July, 1775).

It was a very significant indication of the times to see in the ministry intrusted with the affairs of the clergy, and the *lettres de cachet*, the correspondent of Rousseau, the magistrate who had secretly revised the proof-sheets of *Émile*. The presence of this good man seemed to purify the bureaux filled for the last half-century with the infamous pander of Louis XV. and of all the great nobles, the servile instrument of vice and fanaticism. The first care of Malesherbes was to visit the State-prisons, and to liberate as many as he could of the victims of arbitrary power. It was impossible for him to liberate them all, or to cause those who

[1] *Recueil de ce qui s'est passé en la cour des aides*, pp. 694, 695; *Mémoires de Bachaumont*, t. VIII. p. 138

Digitized by Google

appeared guilty or dangerous to be brought to trial. The unfortunate Le Prévost de Beaumont, who had given information of the *Pact of Famine*, remained in prison. This fact alone shows the immense power of the machinery of despotism. The statesmen who desired the most sincerely to destroy it were caught and drawn into its wheels as soon as they arrived at power. Malesherbes himself signed a few *lettres de cachet*.[1] He proposed, in conformity with the *Remonstrances*, to refer to a special tribunal the fatal weapon of which he was in haste to rid himself. In case of arrest by the express command of the King, the case was to be brought before the new tribunal within twenty-four hours. Louis XVI. approved this; but Maurepas secretly opposed it, and the tribunal was not established.

It was the same with another monstrous abuse which Malesherbes had sought to render less crying. The point in question was the writs to stay proceedings, under cover of which the courtiers were in the habit of braving their creditors, and indefinitely postponing the payment of their debts. Malesherbes demanded that these writs should be granted only by a council, a species of tribunal; and that the debtors favored by them should be banished from the court and Paris so long as they enjoyed the benefit thereof. The King applauded; but nothing was done.[2]

Turgot, meanwhile, continued to advance through all these obstacles. He effaced the last vestiges of the depredations of Terrai. After the lease of the domains and the lease of the mortgages, he annulled the lease of gunpowder, and placed this again under the direct administration of the government. The illustrious chemist Lavoisier figured among the managers (the end of May). Efforts were made to replace by artificial nitre-beds the old, troublesome processes of the search for saltpetre in houses. Lavoisier improved gunpowder, and our armies had the benefit of it in the American War.

An edict of June, 1775, abolished the posts of privileged merchants, and carriers of grain, for the city of Rouen, and the right of banality belonging to this city, in consideration of an indemnity. The maintenance of these privileges had rendered the freedom of the grain-trade proclaimed by the government absolutely fallacious with respect to Rouen and the neighboring provinces. A company of one hundred and twelve merchants had the exclusive right

[1] And Turgot demanded them. — See *la Bastille dévoilée.*
[2] Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 178–180.

Digitized by Google

to purchase grain in the markets of Rouen, Andelis, Elbeuf, Duclair, and Caudebec, and to sell it again to bakers and to private individuals. Another company, of ninety carriers, loaders, and unloaders of grain, had the sole right of the transportation of the article. Lastly, the city of Rouen possessed five mills, enjoying the exclusive right of grinding for its inhabitants,—a right which resolved itself into an additional tax on the bakers. Under all the regulating shackles of the modern monarchy, France still wore the innumerable local fetters of the Middle Ages.[1]

Some time after, a decree of the council permitted travelling bakers to bring and sell their bread without duties in the city of Lyons (November, 1775).

In August, 1775, commissioners were appointed to examine the titles of all seigniors and other proprietors of rights over grain,—a measure preparatory to the redemption of these rights.

The sinking-fund, founded in 1764, and disorganized by Terrai, was abolished (July 30). Other means of redemption were to be employed. Turgot was not opposed to the principle of gradual extinction; for he had just imposed it thenceforth on every corporation and community that might wish to contract a loan. The administrative disorders of the municipal and other corporations furnished but too good reasons for this measure (July 24).

A tax was established for the continuance of the canalization of Burgundy and Picardy (August 1)..

August 7, a decree of the council joined the department of stage-coaches and diligences to the domains, and placed them under the direct administration of the government. The heavy coaches, running ten or eleven leagues a day, were replaced by lighter vehicles, with relays of post-horses on all the highways. A promise was made to put post-coaches on all the cross-roads, and it was explained that the administration by the State was only preparatory to a system of freedom. Turgot well understood what a powerful assistance the facilitation of travel and the increase of intercourse would give the cause of progress.[2]

August 18, Turgot and Malesherbes caused the council to render a decree, severely censuring a colonial tribunal, the superior

[1] A declaration of January 12, 1776, abolished another kind of shackles, which fettered the growth of the glass-works of Normandy. We learn from this document that the use of square panes of glass was substituted for that of lozenge-shaped panes about 1711. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 29.

[2] *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. II. p. 424, and t. I.; *Notice*, etc., p. lxxxvii., on the hostility of the clergy to this arrangement. It took the Bordeaux coach or carriage a fortnight to reach Paris: the *turgotine* made the journey in five days and a half.

Digitized by Google

council of the Cape (the Island of St. Domingo), for having made use of intercepted letters as evidence, "considering that all principles place the correspondence of citizens among the number of the sacred things, from which tribunals, like private individuals, should avert their eyes; and that, therefore, the superior council should refrain from receiving the information which has been given it."[1]

An edict of August, 1775, abolished the ancient alternate, triennial, and semi-triennial offices of receivers of the villain-taxes, in proportion as they should fall vacant, in consideration of the reimbursement of the families; and created a single and only receiver of all the direct taxes for each election district, bailiwick, *viguerie*, etc., in which the office of receiver existed. The simplification of the fiscal posts paved the way for the simplification of the taxes.

August 29, the military *corvée* (the *corvée* for the transportation of troops and military stores) was abolished, and replaced by a tax of twelve hundred thousand francs on the *pays d'élection* and the conquered countries. Turgot had set the example of the redemption of this *corvée* by subscription in his generality of Limoges, — an example followed by eight other intendants. The decree of the council applied the same principle to the greater part of the kingdom.

The entire freedom of the grain-trade was extended to the transportation from one port of the kingdom to another (October 12).

The higher police created or largely developed under Louis XV. was subjected to reformation.[2]

Letters-patent of December 22, 1775, freed the province of Gex from the salt-tax, the aids, and the tobacco monopoly, in consideration of a subscription paid by the landed proprietors, equivalent to the sum yielded by the farming of this little corner of the earth. This amounted to only thirty thousand livres, which cost the province probably ten times as much, through the vexations, the disorders, and the obstacles to agriculture. It was a delicate testimony of gratitude to Voltaire to begin the experiment, at the gates of Ferney, of the plans of the minister whom he supported with so much zeal.[3] The indefatigable pen of the

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 229. The decree prescribed that those who had intercepted the correspondence should be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law.

[2] *Mémoires de Bachaumont*, t. VIII. p. 236.

[3] *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 338.

Digitized by Google

patriarch continued to produce writing after writing in favor of the present government.

The reformatory spirit had conquered a third place in the cabinet. The minister of war, the Marshal de Mui, had just died. The choice of a successor was embarrassing. Turgot and Malesherbes proposed to Maurepas, still governed by the anxiety to ward off the protégés of the Queen, an old general officer who was living in retirement and poverty in a village of Alsace. This was the Count de Saint-Germain, one of the few generals, who, in the Seven-Years' War, had sustained with Chevert the honor of the French arms. Sundry grievances, exaggerated by his ardent imagination, had caused him to quit the army in the midst of the war; after which he had gone into the service of Denmark, reorganized the Danish army on a new plan, then abandoned this country after the fall of his unfortunate protectors, Struensée and Caroline Matilda. Ruined by a bankruptcy, he retired to Alsace, where he was living on a moderate pension, dividing his time between the cultivation of his garden, the writing of papers on the organization of the army, and the exercises of a mystical piety into which he had fallen in his old age.

Maurepas saw an element of popularity in the piquancy and unexpectedness of such a choice. He would not have suffered a third adept of philosophy to enter the council; but he thought that Saint-Germain, a reformer, without being a philosopher, would not make common cause with Malesherbes and Turgot, although owing his place to their recommendation. Saint-Germain was therefore summoned to Versailles; and it was related with admiration, in the city and at court, that the envoy who carried him his appointment to the ministry had found him busied in planting his vegetables with his own hands. The public, seized with a sudden infatuation for this new Cincinnatus, forgot that the old hero of Rome did not quit the army in time of war for private grievances.

Be this as it may, the choice was good as to designs. Saint-Germain had well-conceived plans, at least concerning the organization of the active army. He possessed enlightenment; but the event would show that he had not the character without which enlightenment is nothing in an administrator. The reformation of the army being of value only as a whole, and necessarily attacking powerful and restless interests, these interests should not have been left time to look about them, but advantage should have been taken of the favor of public opinion to prescribe the

Digitized by Google

reform in a body. It was undertaken by piece-meal. Saint-Germain saw very clearly what should be done: but Maurepas, always opposed to bold resolutions, advised the King to promulgate the reformatory ordinances successively; and Saint-Germain neither knew how to insist authoritatively, nor to make the King understand wherein his position differed from that of Turgot, who had to effect changes which were as vast as complicated, and to which the element of time was indispensable. Saint-Germain wished at once to secure for himself a support, and to insure the duration of his reforms after him by the creation of a standing council of war, without the consent of which it should be thenceforth interdicted to change the military laws. The council of war remained a project: Maurepas did not design that the ministerial omnipotence should be limited.

Saint-Germain began his career by an amnesty to all deserters who should rejoin their colors, with the substitution of the galleys for the death-penalty for those who should desert in future, save in the case of desertion to the enemy (December 12, 1775). He then proceeded to the reformation of the privileged cavalry corps of the King's household, corps of officers performimg the duties of soldiers, and receiving promotion simultaneously with the real officers; an institution opposed to all true military principles, but politically useful to the splendor and the strength of an absolute monarchy. It could thenceforth be seen how inferior Saint-Germain's energy was to his projects. He knew not how to resist the clamors of the great nobles who commanded these corps. He abolished the musketeers, who formed precisely the most brilliant arm of the service; but he retained the other companies in part, especially the body-guards, the most numerous and the most expensive, and even went so far as to grant the rank of officers to all the gendarmerie; thus creating a new abuse, while undertaking to overthrow the old ones (December, 1775–February, 1776). He disbanded the provincial regiments, an institution which he would have done better to improve; and left civilians free from all military service, and subject only to conscription for the army and the navy. He abolished the Military School and the Preparatory College of La Flèche, and caused the children of noblemen, educated at the King's expense in this college, to be thenceforth distributed through the ordinary colleges, from which, at the age of fifteen, they were to be sent to the regiments, among twelve hundred cadets of noble birth supported there by the King (February 1, 1776). Another regulation, of March 28,

Digitized by Google

1776, distributed the future cadets among half a score of colleges, under the superintendence of Benedictines, Oratorians, and Minims; an education which seemed a strange one for the training of warriors.[1] March 25, 1776, ordinances of unquestionable utility appeared concerning the number and salaries of the governors of towns and provinces; the formation of the troops into divisions, in such a manner as to have, instead of isolated regiments, a true army, organized in large corps, and trained to manœuvre in unison; the separation of financial matters from all military posts; an increase of pay, which the increased price of all provisions rendered just and necessary; an equitable and regular order of promotion; and, lastly, various measures designed to give the army that uniformity of organization which Choiseul had already so greatly advanced. All this was excellent; but, shortly after proclaiming the abolition of the vendibility of military rank, Saint-Germain permitted a hundred captains' commissions in the cavalry to be sold, in order to provide for sundry expenses of his ministry. It was not in this manner that Turgot led reform.

All the innovations of Saint-Germain were not, moreover, equally judicious. In his disciplinary regulations, a medley of excellent provisions and monastic minutiæ, he took a fancy to introduce corporal punishment, which was in use among the Germans and the English, but which had never been known in the French army. The old Gallic honor revolted: rebellions and suicides ensued when it was in question to punish the soldiers by blows with the flat of the sword. "I love nothing of the sword but the blade!" exclaimed a grenadier; and the speech ran through France. A subaltern officer plunged the weapon into his heart with which he had been forced to strike a soldier. The officers approved of the susceptibility of their soldiers, and the discipline became laxer instead of more rigid.[2]

A speedy reaction was effected in public opinion against Saint-Germain; and the unevenness of his temper, a mixture of abruptness and weakness, made him as many enemies as the inconsis-

[1] A still more singular clause in the disciplinary regulation of March 25 is that in which the minister declares that it is the King's intention to permit "no officer among his troops who makes a display of infidelity." — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 472.

[2] *Vie du comte de Saint-Germain*, prefixed to his *Correspondance avec Pâris Duvernei*, 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1789; *Mém. du comte de Saint-Germain*, 12mo, Amsterdam, 1779; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. *passim*; Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 184, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

tency of his conduct. The confusion of his reforms with those of Turgot, by the unenlightened masses, was an additional obstacle to the latter.

Turgot pursued his course with a firmness which nothing could shake, and an activity which nothing could weary, and this amidst long and painful attacks of the gout, which had already made inroads upon his strong constitution. He hastened more in proportion as he could rely less upon time and life.

The first financial results of his administration were the best argument that he could give the King in behalf of his economic plans. In the report of the receipts and expenditures for 1776, the deficit was found reduced from thirty-six and a half to twenty-three and a half millions. There was really no deficit, since more than thirty-one millions of arrears had been paid: a deficit, therefore, no longer existed in the ordinary expenditure, which, on the contrary, was exceeded by the receipts.

In the course of January, 1776, Turgot presented to the King in council a series of proposed laws, which made new and very great advances in his system. The principal ones were, first, the abolition of the *corvée* with respect to the roads, and the substitution of a tax on the landed proprietors; secondly, the abolition of the duties established at Paris on grain and flour, and of all that vexatious and disjointed police of grain which would have rendered all traffic in grain absolutely impossible at Paris and in the suburbs, had the regulations been executed to the letter, — this was the necessary complement of the edicts of 1763 and 1774 concerning the free transit of grain within the kingdom;[1] thirdly, the abolition of the offices created in the markets, quays, and ports of Paris;[2] fourthly, the suppression of wardenships, masterships, and trade corporations, and the full liberty of every citizen to undertake any kind of manufacture, in conformity with natural right.

Other projects transpired which were to follow these. First,

[1] The declaration of 1763 had left standing all the special regulations of the towns. We have just seen those of Rouen: those of Paris extended their action within a circuit of twenty leagues, intercepted the communication between the east and the west, and, combined with those of Rouen, absolutely deprived the basin of the Seine of free trade. At Lyons, the public granaries and the increase of the duties produced almost the same effect. A royal declaration authorized exportation free of duty within the jurisdiction of the parliament of Toulouse and of Roussillon.

[2] There were as many as thirty-two hundred loaders, unloaders, carriers, etc., of grain. — *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. I. p. 61. The courtier-commissioners of wines were retained.

Digitized by Google

the reformation of the civil household of the King, the monstrous expense of which was triple that of the military household,[1] and which Turgot designed to reduce fourteen millions by a gradual diminution, which would not be completed until the expiration of nine years; secondly, the transformation of the two twentieths, a tax vaguely assessed, and arbitrarily apportioned, into a *territorial subsidy*, established on a strictly proportional basis; thirdly, the thorough modification of the salt-tax, so odiously unequal; fourthly, the abolition or the conversion of the feudal rights of the royal domain into an annual tribute, as an example from the King to the seigniors, who were requested to consent to the redemption or conversion of their rights by reforming the provisions of the local law which opposed it; fifthly, the validation of Protestant marriages.[2]

All the official and privileged classes, from the holders of peerages and high posts in the King's household to the trade-wardens, and holders of masterships, buzzed like a bee-hive, or rather a swarm of hornets disturbed in their nest. The *Flour War* had failed. Preparations were made for a desperate resistance on another ground. The opposition had already been manifested in the council itself. Maurepas had said nothing; but the keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, the tool of Maurepas, had not been ashamed to defend the *corvée*, that odious imitation of feudal abuses, by which the monarchy in the eighteenth century had consummated the ruin of the inhabitants of the rural districts subject to the villain-tax, and had opposed, in the name of the *necessary* privileges of the nobility, the levy of a tax on the landed proprietors for the making and repairing of the roads. Turgot answered Miromesnil with his usual warmth: "The keeper of the seals seems to have adopted the principle, that, by the constitution of the State, the nobility is to be exempt from all taxation. This idea will appear a paradox to the greater part of the nation. The *roturiers* are certainly the most numerous class, and the time has passed when their voices were not counted."[3] The King decided in favor of Turgot, and signed the edicts.[4]

[1] The military household cost eight millions; the civil household of the King, more than twenty-three millions; the households of the Queen, the princes, and the princesses, more than thirteen millions! — See *Comptes rendus des finances*, 1758–1787, p. 169.

[2] Among the writings published for the purpose of paving the way, and shaping public opinion, may be remarked the *Réflexions sur la Jurisprudence criminelle*, by Condorcet (in opposition to the code of the salt-tax). — See *Mélanges économiques*, t. II.

[3] *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. pp. 269, 270.

[4] Louis XVI., seized with the spirit of emulation, wished also to labor in the cause

Digitized by Google

The opposition concentrated in the parliament, which became, as Turgot had clearly foreseen, the headquarters of all the stationary or retrogressive interests. The parliament took the offensive as early as January 30. A young counsellor, D'Éprémesnil, destined to a noisy renown, denounced to the company, in the presence of the princes and peers, an anonymous pamphlet against the *corvée*, and took the opportunity to inveigh in the most virulent terms against the sect of the economists, and Turgot, designated as clearly as if he had been named. The advocate-general, Séguier, assumed a lofty tone towards the denounced pamphlet; a *futile* writing, "more worthy of contempt than of censure." The parliament suppressed the writing, which was the work of none other than Voltaire. Three pamphlets in favor of the ministry had just issued, one after another, from the laboratory at Ferney.[1]

February 9,[2] the edicts announced were sent to the parliament for registration. The *corvée* was abolished as *unjust*. Turgot hoped that such a stigma, stamped on this exaction by the King's own hand, would render its reëstablishment impossible. The tax which replaced it, and which was not to exceed ten millions, was levied on all the proprietors of landed property, or of incomes from real estate subject to the twentieths, which left the ecclesiastical tithes untouched. Turgot "did not wish to have two quarrels on his hands at once." The preamble of the edict concerning the trade-wardenships repelled from the throne, in the name of natural right, the extravagant pretension of making the natural and universal right to labor a crown right, which the subjects must purchase from the prince. All the circumspection demanded by prudence and justice was observed in the suppression of offices and the abolition of wardenships.

The abolition of wardenships was to be immediate only at Paris: in the provinces, it was not to be effected until after the government had taken cognizance of the debts of the communities,

of reform. He exhumed and rejuvenated a regulation of Colbert for the destruction of the rabbits which ravaged the fields adjoining the royal forests (January 21, 1776); thus showing, as the historian (M. Droz) remarks, the goodness of his intentions and the narrowness of his mind.

[1] Bachaumont, t. IX. pp. 37–41; *Merc. hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 324. One of the three pamphlets was entitled *Lettre d'un laboureur de Champagne à M. Necker.*

[2] On the same day, a decree of the council prescribed that the boxes of medicines distributed gratuitously through the country should be tripled. February 6, another decree had reduced the width of the highways from sixty to forty-two feet; thus giving considerable more space for agriculture.

Digitized by Google

and secured their redemption. At Paris itself, the execution of the edict was suspended with respect to certain vocations involving the public faith, the general police, or the security and life of the citizens,—the goldsmith's trade, printing, and pharmacy,—until special regulations had been given them.[1] Ward syndics replaced the officers of the communities with respect to measures of order and surveillance. All kinds of commerce and manufactures were made free to every one, even to foreigners not naturalized, in consideration of a declaration before the lieutenant-general of police. As to workmen employed by contractors, it belonged to the latter to represent to the lieutenant of police the status of the men in their employ. The regulations concerning unhealthy or dangerous trades were maintained, as well as some other provisions prescribed by public morality. The lieutenant-general of police was to judge summarily, upon the report of exports, disputes concerning defective manufacture, and between employers and workmen, under the amount of one hundred livres: in cases above this sum, they were to be brought before the ordinary courts. All the fraternities, a religious form of corporation, as the wardenships were the civil form, were abolished.

Of six edicts sent by the King, the parliament registered only one, decreeing the abolition of the fund of Poissi; a fiscal institution, which imposed useless burdens upon the butchers of Paris, under the pretext of securing them resources. The parliament appointed a commission, of which the Prince de Conti insisted on being a member, for the examination of the five others. February 17, the commission made a report; after which, remonstrances entreating the King to withdraw the edicts were resolved upon. February 23, the advocate-general, Séguier, who had uttered such high-sounding phrases against despotism in the times of Louis XV., delivered a furious harangue against a pamphlet entitled *The Objections to Feudal Rights*, composed, at Turgot's instigation, by the chief clerk of finance, Boncerf. This paper, written with moderation, sought to demonstrate to the seigniors that it was for their interest to accept the redemption of the feudal rights; and its greatest audacity consisted in affirming, that, if the seigniors refused the offers of the vassals, the King might decide the question authoritatively. The advocate-general proclaimed the feudal rights, the *corvées*, and the banalities, "an integral por-

[1] Since Turgot admitted the necessity of regulating certain vocations, it is difficult to understand why the baker's trade did not figure among these exceptions.

Digitized by Google

tion of property;" and inveighed against *men, who, hidden under the veil of mystery*, "sowed ideas among the public, capable of subverting the property of all the citizens, and sought to shake the foundations of the State."[1]

The parliament ratified by its vote this monstrous confusion between privileged and exceptional property, and property existing by common right. It condemned the pamphlet to be burned, and issued a writ against the person of the author. It thus proved recreant to the most honorable traditions of its past, — its former struggles against the feudal spirit. The Council of State, *per contra*, suppressed the opinions and remonstrances which the corporations of arts and trades had caused to be published by Linguet and other lawyers. The author of the pamphlet against *feudal rights* was summoned to Versailles, and placed under the immediate protection of the King. War was openly declared. The remonstrances of the parliament were presented March 4. We do not possess the original. It is affirmed that the parliament enunciated the principle therein, that the people in France were subject to the *corvée* and villain-tax at the pleasure of the seigniors (were *taillable et corvéable à volonté*), and that the King had no power to change this part of the constitution. It is probable that the original did not express itself with this rude abruptness. The King replied by a command to register the edicts, and a prohibition to prosecute the author of the pamphlet against feudal rights. The parliament renewed its remonstrances, and commissioned its first president (D'Aligre) "to obtain from the King the suppression of this inundation of economic writings," and to represent to him the danger of permitting the printing of "seditious writings, tending to stir up all nations to insurrection, the example of which had just been seen in Bohemia."

The Bohemian peasants, indeed, had just rebelled against the intolerable exactions of their lords, and Maria Theresa's government had been unable to reëstablish order except by concessions to this justly exasperated people.[2]

The King repeated the command to register the edicts without delay; and, as certain of the ministers strove to excuse the resistance of the magistracy, "I see very clearly," he answered abruptly, "that no one here cares for the people but M. Turgot and I!"

[1] *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 324, *et seq.*

[2] The seigniors exacted five days of road-labor a week! The five days were reduced to three. — See *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXIX.

Digitized by Google

Louis was at this moment wholly under the influence of the comptroller-general, and Maurepas began seriously to fear that the King would escape him.

The parliament continuing to disobey, the King summoned it to Versailles, March 12. Philosophy and progress turned against the old abuses the forms which had been the usual weapons of despotism and fiscal oppression. The bed of justice was this time, to use the expression of Voltaire, a *bed of beneficence.*

The parliamentary orators, nevertheless, used a language which would scarcely have suited the worst days of Louis XV. After the keeper of the seals had feebly set forth the measures to which he lent his coöperation despite himself, the first president replied by a bombastic harangue, in which he depicted the gloomy sadness diffused everywhere, the people in consternation, the capital in alarm, and the nobility plunged in affliction. The tax substituted for the *corvée* was "ruinous if made as heavy as was necessary, and insufficient if this was not done."

The tax pretended to be ruinous to the privileged classes was light, apparently, to the unhappy *roturiers!* "This edict deals a new blow to the *natural* franchises of the nobility and the clergy," said the first president.

To derive privileges from natural right exceeds the bounds of absurdity!

The first president continued by declamations against the other edicts, even more perfidious than violent, and addressed to outside opinion; showing the subsistence of the Parisian people endangered by the abolition of the police of grain, all public order destroyed by the abolition of trade wardenships, and the redemption of the abolished posts overburdening the finances and leading to bankruptcy. The advocate-general Séguier surpassed the head of his company. He strove to establish, by a theory borrowed from the physiocrats themselves, that, the landed proprietor already paying all the taxes in the end, he would be ruined by a new burden; and complained that this tax confounded the nobility and the clergy with the rest of the people. The only reasonable objection made by him to the edict on the *corvée*, — a thing, moreover, inconsistent with his first argument, — was, that, as commerce profited by the roads as well as landed property, it should also be made to pay its part. He concluded by demanding that the roads should be made by the army. As to the trade-wardenships, he affirmed that these shackles, these fetters, these prohibitions, so

Digitized by Google

much decried, were precisely what constituted the glory, the safety, and the vast extent, of French commerce. He strove to terrify the King by the fantastic picture of the universal ruin which would follow the fall of the trade corporations. An unbridled *independence*, succeeding the regulated liberty (what liberty!) possessed by the nation, would inevitably destroy commerce, manufactures, and agriculture itself! He consented to admit, however, that the corporations were not without abuses, and that there was room for some reforms. He invoked in pathetic terms the glorious memories of St. Louis, Henri IV., Louis XIV., and Colbert, the principal authors, he said, of the regulation of manufactures. A single just idea was submerged in all this medley, — the necessity of insuring the integrity of manufacture.[1]

The registration was proceeded with. While the parliament was depicting the people in consternation, the working-men, intoxicated with delight, were driving over the city in hackney-coaches filled to overflowing, thronging the taverns of the suburbs, with songs of mirth such as old Paris had never heard, and blessing liberty and its author with inexpressible joy. The peasants themselves, so slow to comprehend the good that it was sought to do them, but so persevering in pursuing the hope once discerned, began to be profoundly agitated. In the classes less directly favored by the measures of the government, all who were not blinded by interest or prejudice could not but be affected by the preambles of these edicts, breathing such generous confidence, such noble ardor for goodness and truth, and such active and communicative goodness. Public opinion became hourly enlightened. A very opportune publication placed the parliament in flagrant contradiction with the past. An extract from its registers was printed, showing that when Henri III. in 1581, with a purely fiscal aim, instituted trade wardenships and masterships in a great number of towns in which they did not exist, the parliament resisted this innovation for two years; and that a bed of justice was required to establish the wardenship system, as one was now required to overthrow it. The prayers of the States-General of 1614, so favorable to the cause of the freedom of manufactures, might also have been quoted in behalf of the edicts.[2]

[1] See the official report of the session, ap. *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII.

[2] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. IX. p. 78. *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 318. Two days before the bed of justice (March 10), a royal declaration had restricted the burials which were customary in the churches and the cloisters, and prescribed the enlargement of the cemeteries, or their removal beyond the walls of the towns. The parliament itself had rendered an analogous decree with respect to Paris as early as 1765;

Digitized by Google

The prosperous state of commerce, and the abundance and ready circulation of capital, were excellent arguments in favor of Turgot. Money had fallen to four per cent, not, as under Louis XV., through an arbitrary measure of the government, but through the natural course of events. This rate was adopted as the basis of operations for a bank which Turgot authorized, without an exclusive privilege, under the name of the *Bank of Discount*, the establishment of which was regarded by the merchants with the liveliest satisfaction (March 24, 1776).

It was also on the basis of four per cent that Turgot negotiated a loan of sixty millions about the same time in Holland, to repay debts contracted at a higher interest; the only kind of loan that he believed permissible in a good administration.[1]

A new benefaction diffused joy through whole provinces. An edict of April, 1776, did for wines what the edict of September, 1774, and the complementary edicts, had done for grain. The transportation and commerce of wine were declared free throughout the kingdom, on the payment of the *octrois* or other duties: all the duties were not abolished, but all the prohibitions were removed. The internal customs were thus abolished with respect to the two great productions of our soil, and with the royal customs, those municipal or seigniorial barriers with which the Middle Ages had studded France. The municipal aristocracies of Bordeaux and Marseilles, for instance, could no longer shut out from the sea the wines of Upper Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiny, for the exclusive interest of the territory of the two great cities.[2] Every thing was accessible to all. Turgot realized what his predecessor, whom it was pretended to oppose to him, the great Colbert, had desired, and had been unable to do.

The bed of justice, the excellent measures which had followed it, and the progress of disinterested public opinion, seemed to

and the Cardinal-Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, had caused the same reform to be adopted in his diocese in 1775, and urged the assembly of the clergy to propose it to the King. This was the only progressive measure which he could induce the assembly to adopt. —See *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 391.

[1] *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. p. 341; Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 212.

[2] The Marseilles police punished wagoners, who smuggled wine, by whipping. The very towns which complained most of the monopoly of Bordeaux and Marseilles exercised a similar one within their jurisdiction, and shut out *foreign* wines; that is, the wines of the neighboring cantons. The little town of Veines, in Dauphiny, on claiming from the council, in 1756, the confirmation of its privileges, ingenuously confessed that the prohibition of *foreign* wines was indispensable to it, since otherwise its own inhabitants would not consume the wines of its territory, "because of their bad quality." — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 536.

Digitized by Google

indicate the gradual strengthening of Turgot. Unhappily, the internal state of affairs did not correspond to the progress of events. Each success increased the number and bitterness of the enemies of reform; and it was very difficult for the feeble moral organization of Louis XVI. long to suffice for an expenditure of energy which needed to be renewed daily. The parliament, encouraged from the steps of the throne itself to continue the contest, had rendered a decree, March 30, in which it declared that "a few restless minds having weakened, by systematic opinions, the ancient and immutable principles which should serve as a rule for the conduct of nations," this had already resulted in divers places in the beginning of disturbances opposed to the authority of the King and the property-rights of the seigniors. The court therefore ordered all subjects of the King, feudatories, vassals, and persons under the jurisdiction of particular seigniors, to acquit, as in the past, the tributes and duties to which they were bound, whether towards the King or the seigniors; and forbade the incitement, either by speeches or indiscreet writings, to any innovation contrary to the said legitimate rights and usages.[1] The people of the rural districts, indeed, were beginning to be restless, and to resist, in Brittany and elsewhere, the employés of the farmers-general on the one hand, and the payment of the feudal tributes on the other. It was the first sparks of the conflagration of '89.

May 3, a new decree appeared against a book of the economic school, the *Perfect Monarch*,[2] in conformity with a frenzied speech by Séguier, who styled political economy a *murderous* doctrine; "the product of the effervescence which the love of indefinite liberty, with which all nations are tormented, has caused to spring up everywhere." The promoters of these *seditious* systems, "insane and furious preachers, audaciously promise themselves to destroy all governments, under the pretext of reforming them."

Turgot answered this insolent harangue by a letter of great warmth, addressed directly to Séguier. The parliament replied by complaining to the King of the insult offered to his advocate-general. The opposition of Turgot to the return of the parlia-

[1] *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIII. p. 525.

[2] This book bore a name destined to be rendered illustrious in the Revolution, — that of Lanjuinais. It was the work of the elder brother of the celebrated Breton representative. Much more virulent than the writing against *feudal rights*, it spoke of the *necessity* of insurrection in certain extreme cases. The *perfect monarch* proposed as a model was the Emperor Joseph II. — See the *Mercure hist.*, t. CLXXX. p. 708., Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III. p. 95.

Digitized by Google

ment was but too well justified, and Voltaire was excused for having applauded Maupeou. The situation was no longer tolerable. All plan of reform was impossible, unless this selfish and intractable oligarchy of the robe were crushed anew.

Louis XVI. was not equal to such a resolution. The parliament had powerful allies; and the league hostile to Turgot was hourly closing itself around the monarch beset by unceasing intrigues. All the royal household and the majority of the council were united against the reformatory minister. Maurepas had comprehended that his position, as the Mentor of the King, was no longer tenable by the side of Turgot, and that he must either give place to or overthrow him. He had, therefore, become reconciled to the Queen and the Princes. The Queen and the Count d'Artois, alike frivolous and inconsiderate, were hostile to the comptroller-general on account of his economy; the aunts of the King, on account of his philosophy. *Monsieur*, the only superior mind of the family, but a mind perverted by a depraved heart, affected the part of defender of the privileges; a part which he afterwards abandoned, when he perceived the force of the nascent revolution. He secretly issued a venomous pamphlet against Turgot, in which he took up and exaggerated the petty faults of the minister with signal malignity, for the purpose of turning him to ridicule; but, not content with deriding the somewhat disdainful stiffness and the lack of ease and elegance which were remarked in the manners and conversation of Turgot, and which were so fully redeemed by his noble face, his imposing mien, and the luminous flashes of thought which fell from his lips, he odiously distorted his character and principles.[1]

Meanwhile, Maurepas employed all the art of an old courtier to infuse doubt and fear into the mind of Louis XVI., to undermine Turgot without attacking him openly, and to show the King, in the reforms of the minister, the subversion of the monarchy. Turgot disdained too much to defend himself: he believed too much in the power of reason and justice; he had too much faith in the King, and continued to treat the old man who had summoned him to power, and who was now laboring to

[1] This pamphlet, entitled *The Dream of M. de Maurepas, or the Manikins of the French Government*, was circulated in manuscript, April 1, 1776. Maurepas had not yet become reconciled with *Monsieur*; for he is ridiculed therein, like Turgot. — See Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III. p. 107; *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. IX., April 1, 1776.

Digitized by Google

drive him from it, with a conciliation which did not win him back, but facilitated his undertaking. He thought that he had only excited Maurepas' jealousy by freeing himself from the law made by the latter to his colleagues not to consult alone with the King, and renounced his private interviews with Louis XVI. It was depriving himself of the only means of resisting intrigue.

Louis wavered, a prey to cruel perplexity. Weary of contending for his minister, — as if it were not contending for himself; weary even, it must be confessed, of the too lofty flight imposed on his mediocrity by the genius of this minister, — he nevertheless still hesitated to break his so often repeated promises to sustain Turgot. He fluctuated between the fear of executing the projects of the innovators and that of abandoning them. A means was employed, it is affirmed, to decide him, which savored more of the convict-prison than of the court. Louis XVI., despite his native integrity, still preserved the deplorable habit of violating the secrecy of the mails, adopted by the two preceding reigns, and causing an account to be rendered him of letters possessing any political interest. The handwriting of Turgot was forged in a correspondence which contained sarcasms on the Queen, jests on Maurepas, and cutting speeches against the King, and which was transmitted to Louis XVI. The King fell into the snare.[1]

Maurepas deemed the moment come to strike the final blow. Turgot had but a single friend in the council, — Malesherbes; for Saint-Germain stood aloof, without comprehending that his fate was bound up in that of the leader of reform. Maurepas resolved to deprive him of this support. Malesherbes had not shone in the ministry: of an extended and luminous mind, and a pure and serene soul, he was excellent in counsel, but powerless in execution. The goodness of Turgot was that which is so well expressed by the author of the Latin testament of Richelieu, *Severus in paucos fui, ut essem omnibus bonus.* The goodness of Malesherbes had not this necessary discretion: courageous against things, he was weak against persons. Too wise not to know himself, he had accepted the power contrary to his inclinations, and aspired only to quit it. Turgot retained him as it were by force: if he was of little value in his special ministry, his voice and the authority of his popular name were at least given in favor of all the propositions of the comptroller-general; and the affection

[1] This fact was revealed to Dupont de Nemours, the friend of Turgot, by M. de Angevillers, to whom Louis XVI. had confided it. — See *Œuv. de Turgot, Notice hist.*, t. I. p. cxi.

Digitized by Google

with which he had inspired the King was of great aid to Turgot. Maurepas first rid himself of the minister of the King's household. Upon some pretext, he entered into a calculated quarrel with Malesherbes, of such warmth, that the latter deemed it due to his dignity to proffer his resignation on the spot. Maurepas had counted on this. The King vainly entreated Malesherbes to withdraw his resignation. Their conversation ended with a touching speech of Louis XVI.: "*You are happier than I; you can abdicate!*"

The conduct of the King was quite different towards Turgot. The comptroller-general was advised to resign. He turned a deaf ear to the counsel. He wished to fall like a soldier at his post. May 12, he came to converse with the King on a new plan of an edict, preceded, as usual, by an exposition of his motives. "Another memorial!" said Louis, in ill-humor. He listened distastefully, and asked at the end, "Is that all?" — "Yes, sire." "So much the better," he replied; and quitted the room. Two hours after, Turgot received his letter of dismissal. "It was not such at least," says an historian far from friendly to the progressive party, "as might have been expected by a man, to whom, a few months before, the King had said, '*No one cares for the people but you and I!*'"[1]

Turgot replied by a letter, such as assuredly no dismissed minister had ever before written: —

"I have done, sire, what I believed to be my duty, in setting forth to you with unreserved and unexampled frankness the difficulties of the position in which I have been placed, and what I have thought of yours. . . . My only desire is that you may always be able to believe that I have seen erroneously, and that I have shown you chimerical dangers. I hope that time may not justify me."[2]

[1] Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 192. It is said that his fall was accelerated by the resentment of a person high in position (probably the Queen), who had obtained from Louis XVI. an order on the treasury for five hundred thousand livres. Turgot induced the King to revoke the bond. Three days afterwards, he fell. — Bailli, *Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 214. This story appears tacitly confirmed by Turgot's farewell letter to the King.

[2] *Œuv. de Turgot*, t. I., *Notice hist.*, p. cxiv. He had written one day to the King that monarchs governed by courtiers had to choose only between the destinies of Charles I. or Charles IX. — Soulavie, *Mém. sur le règne de Louis XVI.*, t. II. p. 55. Louis XVI. afterwards became acquainted with that plan concerning the great municipal and administrative organization which Turgot had not had time to submit to him. We possess some annotations on this plan in his handwriting, dated February, 1788: they reflect little credit on his intellect. During the twelve years that elapsed after the fall of Turgot, he appeared continually to go backwards. On the eve of the Revolution, Turgot's reform seemed to him a rash, Utopian scheme; and

Digitized by Google

Versailles, the Palais, the aristocratic drawing-rooms, all the privileged classes, retaliated by an outburst of joy on the popular acclamations which had welcomed, around the barriers and in the hovels of Paris, the abolition of the wardenships and the *corvée*. Vanity, routine, and frivolity noisily congratulated themselves on their victory, while wisdom veiled its head. Men truly enlightened saw a whole world of peaceful hopes swallowed up with Turgot. "Ah!" exclaimed the aged Voltaire, whose sensibility became more demonstrative and more impassioned with age,—"ah! what fatal news do I hear! France would have been too happy! What will become of us? . . . I am thunder-struck! . . . We can never console ourselves for having seen the golden age dawn and perish. . . . I see nothing but death before me, since M. Turgot is no longer in power. . . . The thunderbolt has fallen on my brain and my heart."[1]

The patriarch of Ferney regained his self-possession only to express these same sentiments with more calmness in his noble *Epistle to a Man*. Voltaire was here the voice of posterity.

Would Turgot have really produced this *Golden Age*, so far as a golden age is possible in this world? Would he have opened to France an era of peaceful progress, instead of an era of conquest contended for amidst blood and ruin? Would not the errors mingled with the truths in the physiocratic system have rendered reformation abortive? The principal one of these errors, in an administrative point of view, was the taxation of real estate alone. But, before arriving at the complete application of the theory, the plan of Turgot admitted of a vast series of reforms, all excellent, and all incontestable. The condition of France would have been thoroughly enough improved to have permitted her to support without great disaster the trial of a system of taxation doubtless very defective, but not impossible in point of fact, as it would be at the present time, since the prodigious increase of personal property and manufactures. Would not this unsuccessful

his sole anxiety was to maintain the *existing state*, the régime of the three orders, the social hierarchy founded on birth, etc. — See Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. III. p. 147, *et seq.* We have already given our opinion of this compiler, whose wretched character and versatile judgment are unworthy of any credit, but who had at his disposal a multitude of valuable documents, which the historian is obliged to borrow of him with precaution, and at his own risk and peril.

[1] *Correspond. de Voltaire*, 1776. A young preacher was interdicted the ministry by the Archbishop of Paris for having pronounced an impassioned eulogy on Turgot, in the pulpit, at Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, in the royal parish. This was the enthusiastic and eloquent Abbé Fauchet, afterwards so celebrated in the Revolution. — See Bachaumont, t. IX. p. 128.

Digitized by Google

trial have simply led to the modification of the political economy of Quesnai and Turgot by the political economy of Adam Smith, and the admission of manufacturers and merchants to the rights as well as the burdens attributed at first only to the holders of the soil? Would not the *great municipality* have in time exceeded the aim of Turgot, and have gained the deliberative vote and the attributes of a national assembly? and would it not have paved the way for a remote democracy by a progressive transformation?

This would not have been impossible of realization, perhaps, had Louis XVI. possessed the energy of Louis XIV. and the opinions of Turgot. But, even in this case, would not the resistance of the first two orders, the magistracy and the privileged classes, have compelled the reformatory power to evoke the terrible force of the masses, and to pass over the intermediate régime which Turgot wished to inaugurate? Vain hypotheses! useless discussions! Providence had not in store for us those easy destinies dreamed of by philanthropy. The words of Rousseau were fulfilled. The reformation declared impossible by him had irrevocably failed. What the man *with the heart of L'Hôpital and the head of Bacon*,[1] what Turgot, had been unable to do, no one would do. The monarchy had refused to be saved. Reformation had failed: revolution was inevitable. The rôle of the philosophers, the sages, was ended: it was the turn of the men of destiny."[2]

[1] Expression of Malesherbes.

[2] J. Reynaud, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. TURGOT. There is always, in the life of peoples as in that of individuals, a time of choice and liberty; then fatality comes, which is only the offspring of our errors. It is we who make fatality; and, coming from man, it is not absolute.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

LOUIS XVI. (CONTINUED.)

American War. OPENING OF THE ERA OF THE REVOLUTION. Clugni, Comptroller-General. Reaction. The Lottery. Reëstablishment of the *Corvée*. Reëstablishment of the Trade Wardenships and Masterships. Death of Clugni. The Reaction arrested. Necker, Director of Finance. Reëstablishment of Order in the Accounts and of the Public Credit. Divers Reforms. Voltaire at Paris. Death of Voltaire and Rousseau. AMERICAN REVOLUTION. DECLARATION OF RIGHTS. Public Opinion aroused in Favor of the *Insurgents*. Curious Rôle of Beaumarchais. Indirect Aid furnished by the Government to the *Insurgents*. DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES. La Fayette in America. The Government drawn on by Public Opinion. Treaty of Alliance between France and the United States. Rupture with England. Naval Battle of Ushant. India neglected. Loss of Pondicherry. D'Estaing's Expedition to America. Capture of Dominica. Loss of St. Lucia. Conquest of Senegal. Mediation of France between Austria and Prussia. Peace of Teschen. Alliance between Spain and France. Capture of St. Vincent and Grenada. Repulse at Savannah. Exploits of the French Navy. Invasion of Florida by the Spaniards. Success of Guichen against Rodney. Rochambeau's Expedition to the United States. Acts of Violence of the British Navy against Neutrals. *Armed Neutrality of the North*. England attacks Holland, and invades her Colonies. Conquest of Minorca. Capture of Tobago. Capitulation of Yorktown: a British Army surrenders to the Franco-Americans. Recapture of the Dutch Colonies in America. Taking of St. Christopher. Fall of Necker. Loss of a Naval Battle in the West Indies. Fruitless Attack on Gibraltar. Tardy Efforts in India. SUFFREN. *Six* Naval Battles in Two Years. Recapture of Trincomalee. Bussi sent back to India. Hyder-Ali and Tippo-Saib. Suffren saves Bussi, besieged in Goudelore by the English. He is arrested by Peace. New Treaties of Paris. England recognizes the Independence of the United States. France retains none of her Conquests except Tobago and Senegal, and recovers what she had lost during the War. Spain keeps Minorca and Florida.

1776–1783.

THE acts of Turgot's successor taught the people what they had lost. Maurepas, throwing off the modest guise in which he had clothed his omnipotence, arrogated to himself the title of Chief of the Council of Finance, as if clearly to mark the dependence in which he designed to hold the minister (May 14, 1776); then caused the intendant of Bordeaux, M. de Clugni, to be summoned to the comptroller-generalship. The accession of the new minister was signalized by the immediate fall of public credit. The Dutch were unwilling to effect the loan of sixty millions at four per

Digitized by Google

cent which they had promised Turgot; and the admirable general plan of a loan at four per cent for the conversion of the debt, which was costing the State five per cent, was necessarily abandoned. The stockholders of the bank of discount refused to disburse the ten millions which they had promised to loan the King; and the government was even obliged, in order to spare itself the disgrace of seeing that bank closed which it had so ostentatiously patronized, to restore two millions of these ten which it had already received on account. The comptroller-general could find no other resource for the remedy of the discredit than the establishment of a royal lottery, — an immoral institution, which the parliament had had the merit of opposing on different occasions, and which made the King the croupier of a great gaming-house. The royal lottery was created by a simple decree of the council, without registration (June 30, 1776). The language ascribed to the King was of nauseous baseness. After stating that the French had the bad habit of carrying their money to foreign lotteries, "His Majesty," continues the decree, "judges that, it being impossible to employ prohibition against inconveniences of this nature, the only remedy practicable is to procure for his subjects a new lottery, the different drawings of which, by offering them the chances which they insist on seeking, may be capable of satisfying and fixing their tastes."

The weak Louis XVI. subscribed these ignominious words with the same hand which had signed, the day before, the noble preambles of Turgot.

A few weeks after (August, 1776), a royal declaration reëstablished the *ancient usage for the repairing of the roads;* that is, the CORVÉE! The framers of the declaration had the effrontery to accuse the preceding administration of having neglected these repairs during the two years which had just passed. Turgot had endured his fall with the calmness of a true philosopher; but he could not refrain from tears on seeing the yoke which he had broken placed again upon the necks of the unhappy peasants.

The freedom of manufactures was retracted simultaneously with the abolition of the *corvée.* The edict suppressing the trade masterships and wardenships was revoked (May, 1776). It was not dared, however, unconditionally to reëstablish the ancient abuses: the six corporations of merchants, and the forty-four communities of the arts and trades, were reorganized at Paris; but the freedom of a certain number of vocations was suffered to subsist. The multiplication of trades *not incompatible with each*

Digitized by Google

other was authorized; women were no longer excluded from the condition of master-workmen; the initiation-fees were reduced; and the free merchants and artisans who had established themselves at Paris by favor of the edict of Turgot were permitted to continue to carry on their business in consideration of a trifling annual duty. The same system was extended to the provinces, which had not, like Paris, begun to enjoy the boon of liberty, and which had nothing to regret in Turgot's edict but a promise and a hope.[1]

The persons as well as the works of the economists were attacked. It was not dared to exile Turgot; the King could never have been induced to do this: but the periodical collection of the Abbé Baudeau, the *Citizen's Ephemerides*, was suspended, and a company of revenue-farmers endeavored to secure the condemnation for calumny of this violent denouncer of financial malversations. Baudeau defended himself before the Châtelet, and, from the accused, became the accuser, amid the plaudits of the audience. He was acquitted, but was exiled to the country with another well-known economist, — Roubaud.[2]

The corollary of the reëstablishment of the *corvée* and the wardenships was the renewal of the barbarous ordinances against smuggling. The declaration issued on this subject (September 2, 1776) made the King inveigh "against the evil-intentioned men, who," it says, "have deluded the people with the hope of the abolition of the farming of the salt-taxes, aids, and tobaccoes, and have even ventured upon insulting declamations against the farmers, their clerks and their collectors. . . . This license has borne its fruits. . . . Numerous troops of armed smugglers have made incursions into several parts of our kingdom; fraud has become prevalent in those of our provinces which are comprised within the limits of our farms of the salt-taxes, aids, and tobaccoes (the *pays d'élection*); and the employés and collectors of our farmers, exposed to rebellion, spoliation, and violence on the part of the defrauders, and sometimes even on that of the inhabitants of the towns and parishes, have often succumbed to the excesses committed against them, or have been compelled, to escape them, to abandon their functions."[3]

To this faithful picture of the popular irritation it must be added, that the peasants could only be induced to perform the

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. pp. 68–74.
[2] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. IX. p. 191.
[3] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 102.

Digitized by Google

road labor by force, and by compelling them literally to work under the lash. A formidable store of anger and malediction was accumulating for the future!

Maurepas began to take alarm. Unpopularity and financial embarrassment existed within, and grave difficulties and the increasing chances of a great war without; and it was not with such aid as Clugni's that he could face a situation which was becoming aggravated from day to day. Maurepas had resolved to sacrifice the comptroller-general; when the latter fell ill, and died (October 18, 1776). A vulgar reactor, he had shown himself devoid of application, talent, and morality. A contemporary has given the following definition of his ministry: "Four months of pillage, of which the King alone knew nothing."[1]

Clugni's official successor was a somewhat obscure counsellor of State, Taboureau des Réaux; but the initiative and the real direction of the finances devolved, according to the intentions of Maurepas, upon a personage reputed to be second to Taboureau. Experience had just proved to the aged minister the impossibility of governing with clerks and traditional routine. He resigned himself to the absolute necessity of recalling buoyancy and progress to public affairs on a scale less grand and less decisive than under Turgot, but, nevertheless, sufficient to postpone the storm. One eminent man alone, among those whose special capacity fitted them for administration, offered Maurepas the double advantage of being unfriendly to his enemies the economists, and popular with the public, — the former defender of the Indian Company, the panegyrist of Colbert, the adversary, or rather the rival, of Turgot, the ex-banker Necker.[2] The financial and commercial bourgeoisie regarded this wealthy and able Genevese as their most distinguished representative; and the philosophers thronged the drawing-room where his wife wielded with less grace, but with loftier morality, the sceptre of the Du Deffants and Geoffrins, — that drawing-room where Madame de Staël was growing up. Necker had entered into correspondence with Maurepas by sending him a memorial, in which he pointed out the means of supplying the deficit, and the possibility of providing for the cost of a contingent war by inspiring the capitalists with confidence. Maurepas determined to try the Genevese. To raise to the comptroller-generalship a foreigner, a banker, and, above all, a Protestant, nevertheless appeared to him too daring. He eluded the

[1] *Mémoires de Marmontel*, t. II. p. 204. It should be *five* months.

[2] See *ante*, p. 307.

Digitized by Google

difficulty by causing the new title of director of the royal treasury to be created for Necker (October 21, 1776).

Necker began his career by refusing all emoluments of whatever kind, wishing to prove that nothing of the money-maker remained in him, and that fortune had been in his eyes a means, and not an end. This pecuniary disinterestedness cost him little: he was covetous only of renown. This celebrated personage has been too often and too well described to make it necessary to dwell long here upon his character. His well-known portrait, his face and mien, reveal at the first glance his virtues and his vices, — more haughtiness and austerity than strength; an active and penetrating intellect, with a wavering mind; a somewhat bombastic, but, nevertheless, true philanthropy; much pomp, vanity, and surface-life; the need of acting, the need of seeming, but also the need of being what he seemed; for his was a sincere and upright nature, after all, which loved virtue as it loved renown, but which was not philosophic enough to be happy through virtue without success.

A considerable rise in the public funds attested the friendly disposition of the capitalists; a disposition shared by the majority of the population. It was known that Necker desired the public good as well as Turgot, although by different means; and the appreciation of this difference was within the capacity of the few alone. There was no opposition except among the economists and the clergy. Some prelates complained to the King that important functions had been intrusted to a heretic. "If the clergy will pay the debts of the State," replied Louis, "they may interfere with the choice of the ministers." [1]

Necker began by opportunely calling to mind his former vocation, and laboring to bring the public accounts in order. He instigated a regulation for the liquidation of the debts and the payment of the expenses of the King's household. The heads of the different branches, who received their orders directly from the King, were each requested to present to his Majesty a plan for economizing in his department. All the pensions assigned on different funds were concentrated on the treasury. It was announced that no more privileged interests in the farms, administration of the indirect taxes, or financial transactions, would be thenceforth conferred on any one. Various branches of the ad-

[1] *Mercure hist. et polit.* t. CLXXXI. p. 589. The *Mémoires Secrets*, said to be by Bachaumont (t. IX. p. 272), ascribes to Maurepas this answer, which contains a shade of irony in conformity with his character.

Digitized by Google

ministration of the indirect taxes were united in a single department. These were not reforms, but the preface to them. Another measure was less laudable,— the creation of a loan, part of which was to be redeemed by means of a lottery, and the remainder converted into life-*rentes*. Turgot would not have permitted such an expedient. Life-*rentes* repose on a principle of selfishness too injurious to the social order! This creation of *rentes*, which was made, moreover, on advantageous conditions, owing to the confidence inspired by Necker, was warmly attacked in the parliament by the Counsellor d'Éprémesnil, who demanded the States-General: but this premature appeal awakened no response; the parliament was still under the influence of its pleasure at Turgot's dismissal, and bore no ill will to Necker. It contented itself with recommending economy to the King in general terms, and registered the measures without difficulty (January 7, 1777).[1]

The suppression of the intendants of commerce, then of those of finance, and the substitution of simple commissions for these irremovable counsellors, manifested the intention to concentrate the entire authority in the cabinet of the minister,— a change very questionable in ordinary times, but perhaps indispensable in a period of radical reform. The minister who was destined in appearance to profit by the change, warmly opposed it, like all the innovations suggested by his subordinate. Maurepas had made his choice between the upright and mediocre defender of routine and the man of promises and seductive hopes. Taboureau resigned his office. No nominal successor was appointed to the comptroller-generalship. The director of the treasury was simply named director-general of finance; that is, Necker had the authority without the title, but also without the right of admission to the council (June 29, 1777). Maurepas was not sorry to have the pretext of religion for retaining his protégé in this inferior position. The cabinet of Versailles none the less

[1] Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, continued by A. Renée, t. XXX. p. 109. There was a certain degree of irritation, meanwhile, in the parliament, caused by the movements of the Jesuits, who, it is said, having collected the scattered fragments of their order, had established a great commercial house at Lyons, and were propagating the affiliations of the *Sacred Heart*, and circulating a commentary on the Apocalypse, which predicted, that in the current year, 1777, the Jesuits would be recalled, and the sway of the Pope so firmly established, "that the State would be within the jurisdiction of the Church." This book was condemned to be burned, and a royal edict interdicted to the Jesuits educational functions and sacerdotal duties in towns, and obliged them to subscribe to the Four Articles in order to hold rural benefices or vicarships (May, 1777). — See Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 265; and *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 61.

Digitized by Google

became, to the French and the European public, the *Necker ministry*.

The first measures of any interest that followed the retirement of Taboureau were the prolongation for ten years of the municipal *octrois*, which the treasury shared with the towns (August 2); the application to the mails of a system which was a transition from the management by farmers-general to the direct administration by the government, and which indicated the ulterior views of Necker (August 17);[1] an excellent regulation concerning the direct taxes (November 4), prescribing that no quota-tax could be increased except at the time of a general and public verification of the revenue from the funds of the parish, — a verification made in the presence of the collectors, the syndic of the parish, and three other notable persons elected by the communes. The *twentieth on manufactures* was abolished in the rural districts, where it occasioned much annoyance to the tax-payers, and was of little profit to the State. The language of Turgot reappears in this document, which speaks of the *laws of justice and equality*, and gives the true reason of the legitimate increase of the taxes.[2] One of the objects of this regulation was the authentication of the returns of property-holders concerning the twentieths, an impost for which those subject to the villain-tax were taxed rigorously, and the privileged classes according to the revenues which they were pleased to return. This was the occasion of the first quarrel between Necker and the parliament, which affirmed in its remonstrances that the twentieths were a *gratuitous offering*. "Every property-holder," say the remonstrances, "has the right to grant subsidies, either personally or through his representatives. If he does not use this right through the nation as a body, it must necessarily revert to him indirectly. Confidence in personal returns is, therefore, the only indemnity for the right which the nation has not exercised, but cannot have lost, of granting and apportioning the twentieths itself."

The parliament would have been right had it meant by this that every tax-payer is entitled to be consulted concerning taxation; but applied to the privileged classes alone, and directed

[1] The farmers agreed to pay one million eight hundred thousand francs in ready money, and to share the profits with the State. — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 96.

[2] "To maintain an equilibrium in the finances, the revenues of the King should increase, at least to a certain degree, with the progress of the value of property; since this progress, the inevitable result of the annual increase of money, increases in the same proportion all the items of expenditure." — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 146.

Digitized by Google

against the equalization of taxation, its doctrine was merely the sanction of social injustice under an anarchical form.[1] Justice had dictated the regulation concerning the taxes: humanity inspired Necker with the formation of a commission charged with inquiring into the means of ameliorating the hospitals of Paris, institutions of the charity of the Middle Ages, which had great need of improvement from the philanthropy of the eighteenth century. The aspect of the Hôtel-Dieu, the Salpêtrière, and the Bicêtre, was hideous. The sick, the aged, and the insane were huddled together in these vast receptacles of human misery. At the Hôtel-Dieu, a convalescent, a dying man, and a corpse, were sometimes seen stretched side by side in the same bed! At the Bicêtre, a single bed contained nine old men! The reformation of these odious abuses, the tradition of which still renders the hospitals an object of terror to the lower classes, was decreed, April 22, 1781, upon a report from Necker to the King. The active charity of Madame Necker had created an excellent model, on a small scale, in a hospital which still bears the name of her husband; but the reform prepared and decreed by Necker was not executed until his second ministry, upon a report drawn up in 1787 by the learned Bailli.[2]

The institution at Paris of a *mont-de-piété*, an Italian institution which had already been introduced into Flanders and Artois (December 9, 1777), and the foundation of annual prizes in behalf of new commercial and manufacturing establishments (December 28), are also worthy of mention.

All these, however, might be considered only as preludes on the part of a minister announced with so much éclat; but great events soon obliged him, if not to suspend the internal reforms, at least to subordinate them to another interest of greater importance. External policy was about, for some time, to resume the first part.

The world was trembling everywhere at the sound of arms.

[1] Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 282. To this first year of Necker's administration belongs an edict which is interesting with respect to the history of social institutions,— the permission to the land-owners and farmers of Boulonnais to enclose their meadows, despite the local law of the country which permitted the enclosure of only one-fifth of the estates; and granted to all the enjoyment of the meadows and the *riez* (uncultivated lands) from the 1st to the 15th of March. This was the disappearance of the last relic of the ancient community of the clan. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 136.

[2] *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 96. By a regulation for the extinction of mendicity, it is seen that the charitable workshops established at Paris under Turgot were continued. — *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Digitized by Google

Loud voices seemed calling from all sides on France to return to the arena. The haughty victor of 1763, England, saw her colonial empire crumbling in America, and shaken in India. Meanwhile, a young Emperor full of restless ambition, Joseph II., was looking about him for an opportunity to act and to aggrandize himself, no matter at whose expense: beyond him, the insatiable Russia, with one hand on the spoils of Poland, was stretching the other over Turkey, and already trampling under foot the treaty of Kanardschy, dictated by her the day before.

Suddenly, public curiosity was eagerly aroused by the news that the Emperor had arrived incognito at Paris (April 18, 1777). The Count von Falkenstein, the transparent pseudonyme of the illustrious traveller, staying at simple furnished lodgings, went everywhere, saw every thing, and comprehended every thing. In a few days, he knew Paris better than Louis XVI. would know it all his life. He went to the Invalides to see the creation of the Great King, which Louis XVI. had never visited; he was roused to indignation at the Hôtel-Dieu by the spectacle of inhumanity which his reprobation pointed out to the reformatory intentions of the ministry; and he made his way into the humble asylum where the Abbé de L'Épée, neglected by the government, and persecuted by the ecclesiastical authority, was devoting himself to the admirable task of the education of the deaf-mutes, whom he freed from their limbo to restore them to moral and social life. Joseph II. excited a sort of enthusiasm in Paris, and provoked comparisons far from flattering to the sluggish inertia of the King and the frivolity of the Queen. After a sojourn of six weeks in the capital, he rapidly made the tour of France, and quitted the kingdom by the way of Geneva, without going to see Voltaire, who was expecting him; either through regard for the piety of Maria Theresa, or through the fear of appearing to bow the imperial majesty before this other philosophic majesty. Of the great writers of the age, he visited only Buffon in his temple of the Jardin des Plantes.

The Emperor had been less successful in the provinces than in Paris. He had too plainly revealed the jealousy inspired in him

[1] The archbishop had interdicted him the sacedotal functions as a Jansenist. The government did not come to the aid of the Abbé de L'Épée until the following year, and then very indifferently. In November, 1778, a portion of the property of the convent of the Celestines, which had just been suppressed, was applied to the deaf-mute asylum. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 459. The commission formed for the combination and suppression of monasteries was beginning to bear fruit.

Digitized by Google

by the power and the unity of France. He had, besides, another reason for ill humor, — he had been unable to obtain any political pledge from the King. Every one had thought rightly, that Joseph had come for the purpose of attempting to rivet the Franco-Austrian alliance, greatly relaxed during the last few years; but it was not clearly known what advantage he intended to derive from this alliance. The minister of foreign affairs, Vergennes, agreed with Maurepas in opposing the Austrian tendencies of Marie-Antoinette, had warned Louis XVI. of the projects against Turkey which were ascribed to the Emperor.[1] Precisely the contrary was at that moment the case. Joseph, dissatisfied with Catharine II., who had obliged him to stop his new encroachments on Poland, was inclined to a defensive alliance with France against Russia, in order to prevent the latter from extending her possessions farther at the expense of the Turks. His insinuations were evaded: the King was afraid of witnessing the renewal of the Seven-Years' War, and of pledging himself on the Continent, when there was a probability of a new collision with England. Another foreigner, greater than Joseph II. in history, had preceded him to Paris with a different purpose: this was Benjamin Franklin, who came to solicit the aid of France in behalf of the Anglo-Americans, in insurrection against England (December, 1776).

The cold reception given to the projects of Joseph II. was, nevertheless, a prodigious mistake. There would have been no war on the Continent; for the aged Frederick no longer desired it, and would not have supported the Russians, who would have been restrained without war. Joseph, rebuffed, made overtures to Catharine, and afterwards seconded, instead of opposing, the enterprises of the Czarina against the Ottoman empire.[2]

The excitement caused in France by the journey of Joseph II. was soon effaced by the passionate agitation awakened by the greatest event of the age, — the AMERICAN REVOLUTION. A great diversion from this preoccupation of the public occurred, however, in the beginning of 1778, — a diversion, moreover, which could not but redouble the emotion of the public mind, and which was caused by a new traveller. The latter, who agitated Paris far more than Joseph II. had done, also wore a crown,

[1] Flassan, t. VII. p. 138.

[2] Soulavie, *Mémoires du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 49. Soulavie quotes entire a very interesting memorial found in the papers of Louis XVI., — a criticism on the administration of M. de Vergennes, which he attributes to the Count de Grimoard.

Digitized by Google

but did not owe it to his ancestors. After twenty-eight years' absence, Voltaire arrived at Paris, February 10, 1778.

So long as Louis XV. had lived, Voltaire, by a species of tacit agreement between Versailles and Ferney, had abstained from reappearing on the banks of the Seine. Since that time, the fear of being an embarrassment to Turgot, and the dread of the reaction which seemed destined to follow the fall of the philosopher-minister, had restrained him by turns; but the accession of a Protestant minister speedily proved to him how irresistible that torrent of the age, the sluices of which he had opened, had become. He determined to go thither. No *official* prohibition interdicted to him the capital; and, once there, he well knew that no one would dare drive him away. The clergy, indeed, uselessly solicited his expulsion from the King, but were forced to esteem themselves happy that the prince of innovators was not presented to Louis XVI., as was desired by the Queen and the Count d'Artois, who suffered themselves to be swept away by the tide of fashion, who had not yet sided with the past, and who dreaded the innovators only for their economy. *Monsieur*, who affected reserve and gravity, did not declare himself in the same direction. The rigid and devout Louis XVI. refused to see *the enemy of religion and good morals;* but this was all. If he permitted the clergy to preach against Voltaire in his chapel, he suffered his superintendent of public buildings, by way of compensation, to order from the sculptor Pigalle the statue of the patriarch of Ferney, and the minister of his household[1] to forbid the journals to attack him. This prohibition was afterwards revoked on the clamor of the clergy; but what mattered it to that flood of public opinion which swept away every thing, — to that voice of the people which stifled all opposition by its resounding acclamations?

The city and the court (the time had passed when men said the court and the city), a whole generation, a whole people of great nobles, magistrates, men of letters, artists, and scholars, thronged the drawing-rooms of the mansion where Voltaire had accepted a sumptuous hospitality;[2] each begging a word or a smile from the great man enthroned there amidst the encyclopedists, like a monarch surrounded by his peers. "The glance of Louis XIV. had not produced more effect on a court by whom

[1] Amelot, the creature of Maurepas, and the successor of Malesherbes.

[2] The house of the Marquis de Villette, on the corner of the Rue de Beaune and the Quai Voltaire.

Digitized by Google

he was adored than was produced by the sparkling glance of Voltaire."[1] Without, an enthusiastic multitude indemnified itself for being unable to obtain admission to the sanctuary by waiting for the exit of the illustrious old man or his appearance at the windows, and escorting him everywhere in a triumphal procession. His lightest sayings circulated throughout Paris and France; his steps were counted; all his movements were commented upon; and it was told with emotion how he flung himself into the arms of Turgot, bursting into tears, and exclaiming, "Let me kiss the hand that has signed the salvation of the people!" The imposing scene was recounted which took place when Dr. Franklin,— that illustrious scholar, become one of the prime movers of a glorious revolution, — that man who

"Snatched the lightning from heaven, and the sceptre from tyrants,"[2]

came to entreat Voltaire to bless his grandson. "*God and Liberty!*" exclaimed the old man of Ferney: "that is the only benediction which suits the grandson of Franklin!" August words, which consecrated the lips that uttered them, like the brow which received them, — words which purified the last days of the patriarch of Ferney, and were, so to speak, the formula of baptism conferred by philosophic France on its adopted child, — on the new republican world just dawning beyond the seas!

This continual appearance in public, agitated by so many emotions; the fatigue caused by the rehearsals of a tragedy, the last offspring of his poetic vein, which he placed with a faltering hand on that French stage where his glory had commenced with *Œdipus* sixty years before, — exhausted the ardent old man:[3] the blood gushed from his panting lungs, and in a few days he seemed at the last extremity.

It was a moment of anxiety and universal expectation. Men were not only troubled at Voltaire's death, but anxious to know how he would die. A new and singular event had thrown the clergy into consternation two years before. A prince of the blood, that Conti who had played a very confused and equivocal part for thirty years, had died, August 2, 1776, after refusing the sac-

[1] Lacretelle, *Hist. de France pendant le* xviii. *siècle*, t. V. p. 159.

[2] "Eripuit cœlo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis."
This beautiful line, ascribed to Turgot, belongs, it is said, to the Latin poet Manilius.

[3] The admirable interpreter of the creations of Voltaire and the masterpieces of the past age, Lekain, had just disappeared from this stage, after carrying the dramatic art to the highest point which it had yet attained in France.

Digitized by Google

raments of a belief which was no longer his own. The clergy hoped to far more than repair the impression caused by this *philosophic* death, could it induce the patriarch of *impiety* himself to die in the bosom of the Church. A priest succeeded in gaining access to Voltaire. The philosopher, in less serious circumstances, had shown but too much readiness to adapt himself to the rites of Catholicism, or rather to trifle with these rites. This time, again, wishing to avoid noise, and to die in peace, he yielded, confessed, and signed a profession of the Catholic faith, asking pardon of the Church for the scandal which he might have caused it (March 2, 1788).

The victory of the clergy was not of long duration. The prodigious vitality of Voltaire raised him for a moment from the gates of the tomb: he thought only of effacing the remembrance of what some around him styled an act of weakness, and others a profanation; and his last days were only a succession of triumphs. April 1, he repaired to the Academy, which had sent him deputation after deputation, and which went in a body to meet him; an honor which it did not even pay to crowned heads. The greater part of the ecclesiastical members protested by their absence. Voltaire acknowledged the welcome of the great literary body by a most admirable plan for the remodelling of the everlasting *Dictionary*, which he wished to inaugurate by undertaking the letter A.[1] The long-lived old man laid plans as if he were never to quit the world. From the Academy he went to the Comédie-Française. The details of this scene of delirium, of this apotheosis, which compensated for sixty years of battle, are within the memory of all. The burin has a hundred times reproduced the *Coronation of Voltaire*, that crowning of the king of philosophers, celebrated amid shouts of *Long live Mahomet! Long live the Henriade!* and also, it must be confessed, *Long live the Maid of Orleans!* On this evening, in which a whole century was condensed, Voltaire triumphed *entire* in good as in evil; on this evening, the old man could repeat to himself, in the intoxication of victory,

"I have done more in my time than Luther and Calvin."

It had not been Marie-Antoinette's fault that the crown of

[1] "This plan consisted in following the history of each word from the moment that it appeared in the language, in marking the different meanings which it had had at different epochs, . . . and in employing, to express the different shades, not sentences made by chance, but examples taken from the authors who were the best authorities."—Condorcet, *Vie de Voltaire*. This is the plan which the Academy is now beginning to execute.

Digitized by Google

France had not bowed before the crown of the poet-philosopher. The Queen, who had already gone to see and applaud the first representation of *Irene* in its author's absence, was on her way to the Comédie-Française, when an express order from the King obliged her to turn back. The House of Orleans, which was more and more clearly defining its part as the friend of progress, gave Voltaire, a few days after, a veritable ovation at the house of Madame de Montesson and at the Palais-Royal. The reception of Voltaire among the Free Masons was also an episode worthy of remembrance. Their secret was only his own, HUMANITY and TOLERANCE; and here the good was without alloy.

He had had his recompense: he could die. Over-excited, and preyed upon by this continual agitation, he sought sleep from factitious means, laudanum; and mistook the dose. This accident was beyond remedy. He fell into a lethargic stupor, from which he was never more aroused except at intervals. He refused in these intervals to repeat his profession of the Catholic faith. A last impulse of joy reanimated his heart for a moment when he learned of the success of his efforts for the rehabilitation of the memory of the unhappy Lally. He expired May 30, 1778, at eleven in the evening. He had lived eighty-four years, and had made the world resound with his name for sixty.

The public imperiously demanded funeral honors for the great man. The aged archbishop and the clergy were determined to refuse them. The feeble government of Louis XVI., uneasy and embarrassed, could find nothing better to do than to forbid the journals to speak of the illustrious dead, either for good or evil.

The Abbé Mignot, the nephew of Voltaire, extricated the government from the difficulty by carrying off the body of his uncle, and interring it in his abbey of Scellières in Champagne, before the diocesan bishop had time to oppose it. It was to this place, thirteen years after, that the Constituent Assembly was to send for the remains of Voltaire, in order solemnly to transfer them to the monument consecrated by it to our great men.[1]

Scarcely had the star of Voltaire set on the horizon, when another great star of the eighteenth century vanished in turn.

By a singular contrast, which is not without example among the men most disposed to contemplative life, it was to the tumul-

[1] See, concerning the sojourn of Voltaire at Paris, and the incidents relative to the interference of the clergy, the *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XI. passim; *Correspond. de Grimm*, t. X., April-June. The kind of elegy, *He has fallen into the fatal abyss*, etc., is by Diderot.

Digitized by Google

tuous centre of the great city,[1] that *wilderness of men*, as it has been styled, that Rousseau had come in search of a solitude often disturbed by others, and most of all by himself. He had lived there for eight years, constantly becoming more detached from the things around him (his work on the *Government of Poland* was his last tribute to the interests of this world), and fluctuating between the moments of moral repose, in which a peaceful conscience made him taste that contemplative sentiment of existence which he called the *sweetness of living*,[2] and the increasing paroxysms of his gloomy hypochondria. Thence proceeded the double character of his last posthumous writings, — strange alternations of bitterness and resignation, of aberration and wisdom. We know of no reading more painful than his *Dialogues*, in which he struggled against the phantoms of his brain, and exhausted his strength in justifying himself against imaginary accusations. One day, he himself distributed in the street a pathetic appeal to Frenchmen; another day, he wished to lay the manuscript of the *Dialogues* on the high altar of Notre-Dame, as if to place his defence under the immediate protection of the God of truth. And with this conviction of an atrocious plot which had dishonored him, which had destroyed him in the mind of the existing generation, which had alienated even the little children from him, there was no bitterness, not a word of hatred against his persecutors: he asked vengeance neither of men nor of God. "He was never heard to speak ill of any one:" he rendered full justice to his enemies, both real and supposed; and approved, in the recesses of his humble retreat, the brilliant honors paid to Voltaire.[3] By the side of innumerable proofs of the fixed idea which misled him, never was there in him more moral elevation, never such evangelical sweetness, never such profound, such pure, and such tender religious feeling, as in those *Reveries* which were, so to speak, his farewell to earth. His sublime intellect and his loving heart hovered, as it were, above the wreck of practical reason.

[1] Rue Plâtrière, now Rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau.

[2] "It is not by the accumulation of pleasures that one is happy, but by a permanent state which is not composed of distinct actions."—*Correspondance*, Letter of January 17, 1770.

[3] See the Relations of Corancez and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. The latter relates a little incident of another kind, but very characteristic. One day, Rousseau, while walking, preferred suffering a burning thirst to picking up fruit from the ground without the permission of the owner. This incident, puerile in appearance, shows how rigorously he strove to make his conduct accord with his principles. — *Œuvres de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre*, t. XII.

Digitized by Google

With the sufferings of his mind, his infirmities increased: poverty became harder to the old man,[1] whose pride rejected material aid, as his suspicion usually put aside moral consolation. He at length consented to accept an asylum in the country to shelter his last days: he wished to die in the bosom of that Nature whom he had loved so well; he felt himself nearer God there. Among the different retreats offered him, Ermenonville was chosen; a beautiful spot, which an ingenuous admiration had already peopled with memories of his *Julie*. But the unfortunate man did not bring the peace of the soul into this Elysium, which he enjoyed in a very imperfect manner, and only for a short time.

His end remains shrouded in mystery. It has been pretended (and this opinion has been adopted by many of his most sincere admirers), that, a prey to incurable physical and moral sufferings, and feeling that he was thenceforth powerless to do good in the world, he believed himself justified in abridging his life, and "throwing himself with confidence into the arms of eternity."[2]

The principles of Rousseau against suicide do not suffice irrefutably to controvert this opinion: these principles, based rather upon duty to humanity than upon duty to God, were not sufficiently absolute; and, besides, free will might have been weakened in him by abnormal mental excitement. But other reasons, drawn from the comparison of contemporary testimony, appear to us peremptory. The first account of Rousseau's death, that of the physician, Lebègue de Presle, still seems the most worthy of credence in point of fact; although it is a little too grandiloquent in style, and Jean-Jacques is made to discourse too much therein.

According to this, on the morning of July 3, Jean-Jacques was seized with great anxiety, and acute pain in the bowels, and felt himself very ill. Believing that his last hour was approaching, he caused the windows to be opened, that he might once more behold the sunshine and verdure. "The sun calls me. . . . Do you see that great light? . . . That is God. . . . God opens his arms to me. . . . Being of beings!" The crisis, which had been coming on for some hours, supervened. Struck with serous apoplexy, he fell, with his face to the ground. At the cries of Thérèse, M. de Girardin, his host, ran to him.[3] He was taken up: a few moments after, he was no more!

[1] A poverty which did not prevent him from sharing his bread with the octogenarian aunt who had brought him up.

[2] *Relation* of Corancez.

[3] The pain in the bowels has given rise to the suspicion of poisoning. It is known

Digitized by Google

On a calm and brilliant summer night, his body was silently laid under the shade of the poplars, in an islet of a little lake, in the recesses of the beautiful and melancholy solitude of Ermenonville; whither sensitive and meditative minds flocked as to a holy shrine,[1] and where his mortal remains should have been suffered to repose, while erecting to him at Paris that statue which he so justly demanded of his contemporaries, which was promised him by the great Constituent Assembly, and which he still awaits.

Voltaire had ended his life in the midst of every kind of social splendor: he had died, so to speak, on the stage, amidst applause. Rousseau had expired in the silence and mystery of the forests: each according to his nature. The contrast between them had subsisted to the end; yet an infallible public instinct has forever united in the national tradition these two men, the complement of each other. A poet of virile accents, Marie-Joseph Chénier,[2] has been the voice of posterity: —

"O Voltaire! son nom n'a plus rien qui te blesse!
Un moment divisés par l'humaine faiblesse,
Vous recevez tous deux l'encens qui vous est dû:
Réunis désormais, vous avez entendu,
Sur les rives du fleuve où la haine s'oublie,
La voix du genre humain qui vous réconcilie."[3]

---

that he was taken up bleeding from the floor, with a wound in his head; and it has been thence concluded by some that he had put an end to himself with a pistol, and that M. de Girardin, wishing to conceal the suicide, obtained a certificate from the physicians, attributing his death to a serous effusion in the brain. The cast taken from nature by the sculptor Houdon contradicts this hypothesis. No bullet-hole is visible in this, but only the trace of a double contusion, with a laceration of the skin. Besides, the discharge of a pistol, with the muzzle to his forehead, would not have produced a simple hole, but would have fractured his skull, and rendered casting impossible. There is every appearance, therefore, that Rousseau really died of apoplexy. — See all the arguments of the two contrary opinions summed up in Musset-Pathay, *Histoire de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, t. I. p. 429, *et seq.*; and in G. H. Morin, *Essai sur la vie et le caractère de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, p. 269, *et seq.*, 1851. This last work, faithful to its title, presents a complete summary of every thing concerning the person of Rousseau. We may add personally, according to the tradition preserved in Houdon's family, that this great artist always denied the pretended suicide of Rousseau.

[1] It became the fashion: every one went thither, the Queen among the rest.

[2] *Épître à Voltaire.* The Convention, obedient to the sentiment which Chénier afterwards eloquently expressed, united their remains under the arches of the Pantheon. The public sentiment has not so clearly discerned the harmony between Montesquieu and Rousseau.

[3] "O Voltaire! his name no longer wounds thee!
A moment divided by human weakness,
You both receive the incense which is your due:
United henceforth, you have heard,
On the banks of the river where hatred is forgotten,
The voice of the human race which reconciles you."

Digitized by Google

Whatever, indeed, may be the transformations of the future, posterity will never separate or disown them. The religious sentiment of the future, in the broad horizon which it will learn how to embrace, will leave a place, at least among the avenues of the temple, for the man who so valiantly defended humanity and justice, whatever may have been the blemishes and shadows on his brow. Nearer the sanctuary will be placed the man, who, like the fugitive of Troy, from the midst of the crumbling city of the past bore away the gods, the eternal truths, in the skirt of his robe, to transmit them to future generations. Judgment has been passed on Voltaire by friends as by enemies: the memory of Rousseau is more debated. Voltaire is known by glancing over him; by skimming him superficially, as he skimmed every thing: he opens himself to all in broad daylight. Rousseau is known only by accosting him with simplicity, by studying him patiently, by living with him, by pursuing the unity of his thought through its real modifications and apparent contradictions. Posterity, however, is not, and will not suffer itself to be, deceived concerning the character of the work or that of the writer, whether the attacks come from retrogressive doctrines or from scepticism. Through the errors and exaggerations of his mind, the moral aberrations of the first part of his life, and the partial mental deterioration of the latter part, it will know how to distinguish the accuracy of his views, and, above all, of his fundamental sentiments, and the profound sincerity of his heart.[1]

But we will not enter upon a future which exceeds the limits

[1] We will sum up here what we have said concerning the *anti-progressive* doctrines of Rousseau. Rousseau discerned a great truth: namely, that the progress of ideas and knowledge may go on without a corresponding progress in morals and sentiments; and that, in this case, there is real decline under the apparent progress. He exaggerated this truth, which the recent theorists of progress for the most part had failed to recognize, on account of the incompleteness of their moral sentiment. There is, in Grimm's *Correspondance* (t. X. p. 70, July, 1778; new edit. 1830), a passage concerning Rousseau, of much greater impartiality than would have been expected from this source, and containing a singular confession from the lips of Grimm: "His soul, naturally susceptible and distrustful, *the victim of a persecution, not cruel, indeed, but at least very strange;* imbittered by misfortunes which were perhaps his own work, but which were none the less real; tormented by an imagination which exaggerated all affections like all principles; and more tormented, perhaps, by the trickeries of a woman (Thérèse), who, in order to remain the sole mistress of his mind, had alienated him from his best friends by causing him to suspect them, — his soul, at once too strong and too weak to bear the burden of life with tranquillity, unceasingly saw itself surrounded with shadowy perils which were seeking its destruction. (Exact details follow concerning Rousseau's idea, that a great league was formed against him; a fixed idea, to which all the incidents of his life, even to the most trifling, related.) On every

Digitized by Google

of our work. The last years of the ancient régime alone belong to us.

The year 1778 was a solemn one. The disappearance of Voltaire and Rousseau was a great sign. The brilliant eighteenth century was vanishing; and a stormy and sombre age was dawning on the horizon. The era of ideas was closing: the era of action was about to open.

Between the death of Voltaire and that of Rousseau, the first gun had been fired in the American war.

We must retrace our steps for a short space in order to call to

subject foreign to the mania of which we have just spoken, his mind preserved all its strength and energy to the end."

Nothing can be more just than these reflections: and this it is that renders Grimm's conduct to Rousseau inexcusable; for he had very clearly discerned the beginning of the moral malady of this great and unfortunate man twenty years before, and had done every thing to facilitate its progress. We mu listen to Grimm in the passage which we have just quoted, and not in the *Memoirs*, or rather the novel, of Madame de Épinai, a species of counterpart of the *Confessions*, found in Grimm's home, and revised at leisure, and to which some have sought to attribute an authority which it in no manner deserves. The words of Madame d'Épinai's son should have some weight in this question: "I have often been the witness," he says, "of the warm reproaches addressed by Madame d'Épinai to Grimm on account of his harsh conduct to poor Jean-Jacques, who had not deserved it." — See the *Œuvres inédites de J. J. Rousseau*, published by Musset-Pathay, p. 389, 8vo, 1825. Rousseau has been thoroughly *denied* of late. We content ourselves with denying, on our side, that it is possible for a true genius, one of those great and legitimate interpreters of the human soul and heart, to exist without the *man* behind the *writer*: we do not mean, of course, without the living ideal, but without the *man*, without the *true* being, whatever may be his inconsistencies. Whence can he draw his inspiration, if he has not the living source within himself? If a *wicked man* and a *liar* could have written *Émile*, it is evident that we may thence infer absolute scepticism concerning all men and all human speech. We will conclude with Jean-Jacques by quoting a panegyric, which the name of the author will doubtless render worthy of interest: —

"It is not for his great talents," says Mirabeau, "that I envy this extraordinary man, but for his virtue, which was the source of his eloquence and the soul of his works. I knew J. J. Rousseau, and I know many of his associates. . . . He was always the same: full of probity, frankness, and simplicity, without any kind of art in concealing his faults or displaying his virtues. Whatever may be thought or said of him for a century to come (the space and limit which envy leaves to detractors), so virtuous a man, perhaps, never existed, since he was virtuous with the full conviction that none believed in the sincerity of his writings and actions. He was virtuous despite nature, fortune, and mankind, which loaded him with sufferings, reverses, calumnies, sorrows, and persecutions. He was virtuous despite the weaknesses which he has revealed in the Memoirs of his life. Rousseau gained a thousand times more from his passions than they detracted from him. Whatever abuse may be made of his own confessions, they will always prove the good faith of a man who spoke as he thought, wrote as he spoke, lived as he wrote, and died as he had lived." — See Musset-Pathay, *Hist. de J. J. Rousseau*, t. I. p. 300. Mirabeau was too great not to love virtue, although he had the misfortune not to practise it.

Digitized by Google

mind the beginning of this revolution, which was nothing less than the enfranchisement of a world.

We have indicated elsewhere[1] the character and progress of the English colonies of North America. After the peace of 1763, the English government wished to make them bear their part in the enormous burdens inflicted by the war upon Great Britain. This was just. But England undertook to enforce instead of requesting it. The Americans submitted without objection to the customs-laws, the commercial taxes, instituted by the British parliament for the whole empire; but, when the internal taxes special to the colonies were in question, they consulted their assemblies, or provincial *parliaments*. The government of George III., under the evil inspiration of Lord Bute, who still ruled the ministry, although he was no longer minister, claimed the right of dispensing with their consent, by virtue of precedents dating back to the times when several of the colonies had, as yet, no legislatures. The English parliament saw in the right to tax the colonies an extension of its prerogative, and willingly seconded the crown upon this point. The Americans would have probably granted what was desired, had it been asked of them: they refused because it was exacted of them. The American Revolution arose, therefore, — and this constitutes its greatness, — from a question of right, far more than a question of material interest. As early as 1764, on the rumor of the plans of the English cabinet, a *Declaration of the Rights of Man* was drawn up in New England. From that time, it could be seen that there was a chasm between Old England and this infant nationality, — between a society of fact and tradition, and a society of right and reason. It is a great error to see in America, as has been sometimes said, only a *sturdy England*.

The institution of a stamp on paper (March 22, 1765) was the signal for the crisis. America, forewarned of the intentions of the English government, was already in a state of fermentation. The Presbyterians, animated by democratic sentiments, had taken advantage of the prevailing agitation to organize themselves into a general association, which they had always been prevented from doing; and this religious association became a vigorous political instrument. The Stamp Act was received with demonstrations of mourning and of profound indignation. The assembly of Virginia, the province from which the liberator of America was about to arise, declared the Stamp Act unconstitutional. Its *Resolutions* had

[1] See vol. I. p. 425.

Digitized by Google

not the theoretical character of the *Declaration of Rights*, issued in the northern provinces; but the discussion assumed the most threatening aspect within its limits. In this province of the Cavaliers and the Episcopalians, the memory of Cromwell was openly invoked, as if on the Puritan shores of Connecticut. The agitation was still more violent in New England, the hot-bed of American democracy. Men did not content themselves with predicting resistance: they began to organize. At Boston, that glorious city, which was and which still is the true moral centre of North America, — so far as a centre is possible in that varied and free community, — the defenders of *Constitutional Right* assembled under a great elm, which was styled the *Tree of Liberty*. The shoots from the tree of Boston soon covered British America, and were destined later to cross the ocean.

At the suggestion of the assembly of Massachusetts, the province of which Boston was the capital, an extraordinary congress of representatives from the colonies assembled at New York. This congress, with as much moderation as firmness, asserted that the inhabitants of the colonies had the same rights as the natives of Great Britain; and that, being unable to be represented in parliament, they should be so by local assemblies, exclusively invested with the right of taxing them. Congress addressed a petition to the crown, and an address to the two houses, to demand the abrogation of the Stamp Act. As a means of coercion, it was resolved to attack England in her most vulnerable point, commerce; and associations were formed everywhere, the members of which pledged themselves to refuse all British products, at the price of whatever privation, until reparation was granted the colonies. They did more: they prevented the landing and distribution of the stamped paper; and, the administration of civil justice and commerce being thus suspended in point of fact, the assembly of Massachusetts boldly set itself up in opposition to the English parliament, and authorized the citizens to dispense with the stamp in business transactions.

The British government yielded, astonished. Lord Chatham had supported the justice of the cause of the colonists in the parliament. The ministry caused the Stamp Act to be repealed (March 18, 1766), but theoretically maintained the absolute legislative right of the parliament. Lord Chatham returned to power; but as we have already said elsewhere, worn out by cruel physical sufferings, he was only the shadow of himself during his second ministry.

Digitized by Google

America rejoiced at its victory, and at the return of the great minister; but it rejoiced, as it were, under arms: and it did well; for the colleagues of Lord Chatham, in unison with the parliament, were not long in making a new attempt at arbitrary power by enjoining on the colonists to furnish certain supplies to the troops. The assembly of New York refused. It was suspended by act of parliament until it should have obeyed; after which the parliament levied duties on paper, glass, tea, etc. (1767.)

The Massachusetts assembly gave the signal of resistance by a circular letter to the other colonial assemblies, in which the representatives of Massachusetts claimed at once their natural rights as men, and their legal rights as Englishmen. The governor of the province dissolved the assembly. The following assembly took the same course. It was dissolved in turn (1768). The assemblies of the other colonies openly approved the conduct of the assembly of Massachusetts, and the people of this province replaced the dissolved assembly by an extraordinary convention. The convention, prohibited by the governor as illegal, separated, but left behind it a committee of organization; while the governor, on his side, received troops from England, and installed them in Boston.

British America was agitated for a great purpose. England, meanwhile, was a prey to disturbances which seemed to reveal symptoms of political dissolution rather than of regeneration. In 1769, on the occasion of the arrest of the celebrated Wilkes, indicted on account of his pamphlets, violent riots occurred in London. The people carried through the city a car, in which was seated a young girl, with the inscription, *Liberty*. On one of the sides of the car was written, "Charles I., crowned 1626, beheaded 1649;" on the opposite one, "James II., crowned 1685, expelled 1688;" and behind the car, "George III., crowned 1760, ——."

Lord Chatham, a stranger to the last acts of the ministry, retired, and left his colleagues to bear the weight of their unpopularity. They nevertheless retained the majority in a parliament jointly responsible for their mistakes, and took another step in the fatal path which they were pursuing. They thought to intimidate the colonists by passing an act decreeing that the American delinquents should be carried to Great Britain for trial. The exasperation of the colonies reached its height. A new Massachusetts legislature replied by demanding the recall of the British troops and the indictment of the governor, and protesting against the suppression of the jury. The other provinces fol-

Digitized by Google

lowed the example. The associations against the importation of British products were reorganized on a large scale: all who did not join them were branded with infamy; and the wisest and most moderate minds thenceforth familiarized themselves with the thought of a recourse to arms in the last extremity.[1] The first blood shed at Boston, March 5, 1770, in an affray between the soldiers and the people, seemed to gush forth afresh throughout America.[2]

The British government hesitated the second time. A new head of the cabinet, Lord North, upon the clamor of the English merchants, who were ruined by the interruption of American commerce, caused the duties recently established to be abolished, with the exception of that on tea (1770). The concession was puerile. In such a question of principle, it was all or nothing. The Americans relaxed their rigor towards imports from England, but maintained the exclusion of tea brought by English ships. There was scarcely a truce. The irritation speedily revived on account of an act of parliament, according to which the governor and judges in each colony were thenceforth to be appointed by the crown, and no longer by the colonial assemblies. The Massachusetts assembly explicitly denied to the two houses the right of making laws for the colonies. It was the first time that the supremacy of the parliament had been rejected in express and general terms. The legal resistance tended to become revolution (1772).

The arrival of large cargoes of tea, sent by the East-India Company, determined the crisis. A company of Bostonians, disguised as Indians, boarded the ships on their entrance into the harbor of Boston, and threw the chests of tea overboard. This example was followed in the other provinces (1773). On the other hand, the Massachusetts assembly voted the indictment of the judges who should consent to receive their salaries from the crown. The port of Boston was closed by the parliament by an immense majority, despite an opposition in which Fox and Burke signalized themselves. Lord Chatham, after two years' silence, vainly gave the Opposition the aid of his former renown (1774). Lord North, the head of the ministry, wittily jested on the invocation of *natural rights* by the colonies, — rights which he had seen written nowhere upon parchment.

[1] See a letter from Washington, April, 1769, in his Life, translated by M. Guizot, t. I. p. 142.

[2] This was preceded, however, by a sanguinary combat in the streets of New York, January 19, 20, 1770. — See Appendix. — Tr.

Digitized by Google

The colonists did not jest on the other side of the Atlantic. The struggle for liberty was inaugurated under the religious forms borrowed from the Bible by Protestant nations. A general fast was prescribed by all the assemblies, after the example of the assembly of Virginia (June 1, 1774); after which the assemblies formed, by means of deputations, a new General Congress as in 1765, but destined to produce far different results.

The general association for the interdiction of British imports did not wait for the assembling of Congress to reorganize in the most solemn form. The members pledged themselves not to dissolve until after the reopening of the port of Boston, and the full and entire recognition of the rights of the colonies. The most universal and efficient sympathy aided Boston to endure the suspension of its commercial existence. The neighboring towns refused to profit by the misfortune of the noble city. An admirable unity of sentiment broke forth throughout British America, with the exception of a feeble minority of royalists and aristocrats. The Southern colonies renounced, with a resignation worthy of being an everlasting example, all the articles of luxury and comfort from England which had seemed a necessity to their wealthy planters.

The public enthusiasm redoubled on the arrival of new laws which changed the constitution of Massachusetts (August 8, 1774.) The whole province refused to submit to them. Whoever should accept office under the new constitution was declared infamous and traitorous. The citizens began to refuse the payment of the former taxes constitutionally established. The governor adjourned the annual session of the assembly. The assembly was elected, and reassembled, despite the prohibition of the governor, at Concord, twenty miles from Boston; while the General Congress opened at Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania (September 5, 1774). The instructions of the deputies to Congress, firm but moderate, still repudiated all idea of a separation between the colonies and the mother-country, and only demanded the redressal of grievances. But, at the same time, Congress resolved to succor Boston and Massachusetts by force, if the English government employed force against this city and province; took measures to regulate the prohibition of English importation, and to prepare for the prohibition of exportation to England and for the creation of American manufactures; and recommended to American merchants not to take advantage of the circumstances to increase the price of commodities. Congress framed

Digitized by Google

a DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, "founded at once on the immutable laws of nature, on the principles of the English constitution, and on positive charters and laws;" and addressed a petition to the King, a memorial to the English people, and circular-letters to the English colonies and to Canada. The address to the Canadians was filled with quotations from Montesquieu. The language of all these papers, full of brilliancy and vigor, attested a society which designed to base itself on right and reason above every thing, as we have said, yet without rejecting tradition, but giving it its just share. Why should it have rejected this, indeed? Traditional liberties had just ended of themselves in the great philosophic liberty of the eighteenth century, like rivers in the ocean! The French Revolution could not combine, with this facility, the two great elements of the life of nations, — philosophic right and historic right; it had not at hand the immediate tradition of liberties constantly in action: thence proceeded the sublime temerity with which it launched into pure reason and absolute right. America, more fortunate, immediately attained its equilibrium: we are still seeking ours.

The Congress separated after convoking another general assembly for May, 1775. The people armed themselves on all sides, and waited. A new parliamentary election took place, meanwhile, in England. The ministry retained the majority. Lord Chatham, Fox and Burke, vainly strove to secure the triumph of conciliatory measures. The Newfoundland fishery was interdicted to the colonies of North America. It was forbidden to transport arms and munitions to the colonies. Massachusetts was declared rebellious. Lord North himself, meanwhile, a man of undecided mind at the bottom, under a show of haughtiness, caused the adoption of a sort of vague and confused compromise, by which it was to be acknowledged, in general terms, that the colonies were obliged to participate in the common expenses.

This was unimportant, and could not arrest the course of events. Hostilities had commenced. The people in the colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut had taken possession of the posts, and carried off the guns. The Governor of Massachusetts attempted, on his side, to seize a dépôt of arms and munitions formed by the colonists at Concord, the seat of the assembly of this insurgent colony. The body of troops sent from Boston on this expedition was repulsed with loss by the Massachusetts militia, who boldly marched to besiege the English in Boston (April, 1775), and were speedily reënforced by the neighboring

Digitized by Google

colonies. The Massachusetts assembly decreed a provincial paper-currency.[1] The new General Congress decreed an army and a paper-currency for all the colonies united; prohibited all commerce with the British possessions not included in the *Great Alliance;* declared the political compact broken between Massachusetts and Great Britain; and counselled the inhabitants of this colony to form a new government. July 6, 1775, Congress, nevertheless, adopted a manifesto, in which it still protested against the charge of separation, declared that it desired the reëstablishment of the union with the mother-country, and addressed a last petition to the King and new addresses to the English and the Irish; but, at the same time, Benjamin Franklin, who had returned from England, where he had long been the official agent of Pennsylvania, and had used every effort to arrest the British government in its fatal course,[2] prepared a plan of confederation and *perpetual* union in case the grievances were not redressed. The custom-houses were closed, and the ports were opened to all nations who were willing to protect the commerce of the associated colonies, Great Britain being excluded. It was resolved that the partisans of tyranny should be held responsible for the acts of violence committed by the British troops against good citizens. GEORGE WASHINGTON, of the province of Virginia, was appointed commander-in-chief by Congress.

The war increased. A British army, which had landed at Boston, was unsuccessful in raising the siege. The governors of the Southern provinces, expelled by the colonists, were compelled to wage a piratical warfare on the coasts, after vainly attempting to incite the negroes of the slave colonies to insurrection. The Americans strove to gain over Canada to their cause. The British government, after at first imposing the English laws on Canada, had just restored to it its ancient laws. The nobles were grateful for this restoration of the past; but the rest of the popu-

[1] It is curious to compare the history of the American continental money with that of our *assignats*. The English colonies were already familiar both with the use and the depreciation of the paper-currency. The Massachusetts paper, at the peace of 1763, lost eleven twelfths of its value. During the war of the Independence, in September, 1779, the paper of Congress lost nineteen twentieths; in March, 1780, thirty-nine fortieths; at the close of 1780, seventy-four seventy-fifths. The circulation ceased, about this epoch, in the Eastern and Middle States, and lasted a year longer in the Southern States, where it did not die out until the paper was worth only a thousandth of its nominal value. Congress, in 1784, determined to redeem the paper according to the relative value for which each one had received it. There were about ten thousand millions, at the nominal value. Like the *assignats*, the United States reached the maximum, for a moment, at the close of 1777, but soon receded from it.

[2] See the Memoirs of Franklin.

Digitized by Google

lation did not share their sentiments, and the great majority of the Canadians refused to take up arms against the Anglo-Americans, and favored their invasion. The forts on the frontier, then Montreal, fell into the power of the expedition despatched by the insurgents. The attack on Quebec was less successful (December 31, 1775). The bishop and the nobles sustained the English. The Americans and their Canadian friends, unable to carry the place by storm, besieged it: but the English received considerable reënforcements; and, after heroic efforts, the Americans were obliged to evacuate Canada in the spring of 1776.

The English government had finally recovered from the absurd contempt which it had at first manifested towards the mutiny of the colonists. In default of native soldiers, it sought to purchase mercenaries everywhere. On the refusal of Catharine II., who was unwilling to sell her Russians, it procured food for the cannon at the price of gold from the petty German princes. Hesse was its principal market of human flesh.[1] It is difficult to describe to what a degree of abjectness and depravity certain of these sovereign houses had fallen, especially that branch of Hesse-Cassel, so glorious at the time of the wars of the Reformation.[2] The parlimentary opposition protested in vain against this ignoble traffic, and against the appeal made by the government to the savages whom it let loose like wild beasts upon the colonists.

In proportion as the Anglo-American colonists confirmed their principles more directly by their actions, the interest which they inspired in France continued to increase and to invade every thing. Very different but equally energetic sentiments inflamed the whole community. All that had been read, all that had been theoretically conceived, all that had been drawn from the *Spirit*

[1] The example had been set by Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick (the Brunswick of the Revolution).

[2] An unheard-of and incredible letter from the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel to one of his officers has been cited, which we copy without comment: —

"You cannot imagine the joy which I felt on learning, that, of the nineteen hundred and fifty Hessians engaged in battle, but three hundred and forty-five escaped: this makes exactly sixteen hundred and five killed, and consequently six hundred and forty-three thousand florins due me from the treasury, according to our agreement. The court of London objects that there are a hundred wounded who should not be paid for as dead; but I hope that you have remembered the instructions which I gave you on your departure from Cassel, and have not sought to recall to life by inhuman aid the unfortunates whose days you could only prolong by depriving them of a leg or an arm. This would be making them a fatal gift; and I am sure that they had rather die gloriously than live mutilated and unable to serve me. Remember that, of the three hundred Lacedemonians who defended Thermopylæ, not a single one returned. How happy I should be, could I say the same of my brave Hessians!"

Digitized by Google

of Laws and the *Social Contract*, was about to be seen realized and living. Even those of whom philosophy had not made a conquest, those who did not love the Americans as freemen, loved them as the enemies of England. The one saw in them the triumph of the new ideal, the greatness of humanity; the others, the avengers of their country. Those most opposed to innovations in France welcomed the innovations in America as fatal to the enemy of France;[1] and very few among the future adversaries of the French Revolution understood the saying of Joseph II., "It is my trade to be royalist."[2] This society, which was speedily to be divided in so terrible a manner, was for a moment in unison, and postponed its internal problems to await in suspense the intelligence from the other hemisphere.

The French government, which felt the blast of war whistling about it, and which dreaded this war,[3] was a prey to lively anxieties. Public opinion bore upon it forcibly. Counsels and incitements came to it from all sides. Among the numerous memorials addressed to the King by private individuals, we remark two, written by a man of ardent and daring mind, of restless and stormy renown, of questionable character, and of prodigious activity, — that Beaumarchais, who was to some only a dangerous intriguer, suspected of pretended crimes;[4] and to others, to the majority, the heir presumptive of Voltaire, and the successful conqueror of the Maupeou parliament.[5] Employed by Louis XV. in the secret diplomacy, he had numerous relations with the different English parties, and was allied at once with one of the ministers and with the demagogue Wilkes. In his first memorial (September 21, 1775), he exaggerated the internal perils of England, which he depicted as on the eve of revolution. Politicians

[1] And also by a natural and involuntary sympathy. *Man naturally loves justice*, so long as his passions and interests are not involved against it.

[2] The answer of Joseph II. to a lady in a Parisian circle, who questioned him on his sentiments concerning the *insurgents*.

[3] It had by no means instigated the American Revolution, as has been asserted, not even at the beginning of the disturbances, in the times of M. de Choiseul. This minister, indeed, sent an agent to America to observe what was passing; but he did not even give him an audience on his return, so much was he a stranger to the movements which it has been sought to make a crime or an honor in him. — See *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. p. 11.

[4] His enemies did not hesitate to accuse him of poisoning.

[5] He had just increased his popularity by his *Barber of Seville*, a work of equivocal taste, and which would have scarcely been accepted in the palmy days of comedy, but which presents original types, and is full of spirit and piquant features, in which we recognize the adversary of Goëzman.

Digitized by Google

have often fallen into this delusion at the sight of disturbances which would suffice to overthrow other governments, but which here produce only a momentary commotion, owing to the habits of legal order and the safety-valves open to the ebullition of popular feeling.

Beaumarchais saw more clearly concerning America, which he declared lost to the mother-country. In the second memorial (February 29, 1776), he sought to demonstrate the necessity of succoring the Americans, if it was desired to save the French West Indies, and even to preserve peace. Victorious, England would fall back on our islands; vanquished, she would make the same attempt to indemnify herself for her losses. Should the parliamentary opposition prevail, and reconcile the two Englands, they would unite against us. It was only possible to preserve peace between France and England by preventing peace between England and America, and counterbalancing the forces of both parties by secret aid to the Americans. He proposed to succor America through the medium of private individuals, who were to be pledged to secrecy.[1]

The minister of foreign affairs, Vergennes, hesitated long; the King and Maurepas, still longer. The annoyances and acts of violence of the English navy towards our shipping caused Beaumarchais, who wrote letter after letter to the King and the minister, to gain ground. The question was thoroughly discussed in the council, and treated upon in writing. We have not M. de Vergennes' memorial; but we possess that of Turgot, written in April, 1776, a month before the fall of the illustrious comptroller-general. Turgot set out from a new and unexpected point of view in him. Putting aside his sympathies, and reasoning on the basis of pure interest, he said that it was to the interest of France for England to succeed in subjugating her colonies, because, if they were ruined, England would be weakened thereby; and, if they remained strong, they would always preserve the desire of independence, and would continue to be an embarrassment to the mother-country. The eagle glance of Turgot speedily reappeared in the sequel of the memorial. Whatever might be the immediate issue of the insurrection, he predicted, the definitive issue would be the recognition of the independence of the colonies by England herself, a complete revolution in the political and

[1] *Beaumarchais, sa vie, ses écrits et ses temps*, by M. de Loménie. This extremely conscientious work offers very interesting materials for the history of the closing years of the ancient régime.

Digitized by Google

commercial relations between Europe and America, and the final emancipation of all the European colonies. "I firmly believe that every other mother-country will be forced to abandon all empire over her colonies, permit an entire freedom of commerce with all nations, and content herself with sharing this freedom with others, and with preserving the ties of friendship and fraternity with her colonies. It is important that Spain should familiarize herself with this idea."[1]

Turgot thought, with Vergennes, that offensive warfare should be avoided. In this respect he invoked moral reasons, as well as the state of the finances and that of the army and the navy. Time was needed to regenerate these branches of the King's power; and there was danger of rendering our weakness eternal by making a premature use of our reviving strength. Lastly, the decisive reason was that an offensive warfare would reconcile the mother-country and the colonies by inducing the first to yield. Turgot, in his conclusions, did not, however, oppose the proposals of Beaumarchais; for he advised the government to facilitate measures whereby the colonists could procure the munitions, and even the money, which they needed, by means of commerce, without departing from official neutrality, and without direct aid.

To reëstablish our maritime forces quietly; to put ourselves in a condition to fit out two squadrons at Toulon and Brest; to arrange every thing for a descent upon England should war become imminent, in order to oblige the enemy to concentrate his forces, and to take advantage of this concentration to send expeditions both to the West Indies "and to India, where we should have means of action prepared;" nevertheless, to avoid war until it should become absolutely inevitable, because it would prevent for a long time, and perhaps forever, an internal reform, which was positively necessary, — such were the last counsels of the reformatory minister on the eve of his fall.[2] These counsels were followed as to the indirect assistance to America, and the reëstablishment of

[1] Shortly after Turgot framed this prophecy, a great insurrection broke out against Spain among the natives of Peru, and was the first presage of the general revolution which was effected thirty years after in Spanish America.

[2] *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. II. There is an observation in this memorial, worthy of remark; namely, that it was to the interest of England to commence hostilities from the beginning of April to the end of October, because that was the season when our best sailors employed in the fisheries, and our ships occupied with American commerce, would prove an easy prey; while it was to the interest of France and England to commence hostilities from October to January, because that was the season when the English fishermen were on the way to dispose of their cargoes in Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

Digitized by Google

our maritime forces:[1] later, the government did not know how to choose the best provisions for the event of war.

Vergennes finally came to a decision, and induced the King to accept the proposals of Beaumarchais. The personal favor of Beaumarchais with Maurepas, whose senile frivolity he charmed, did more, perhaps, than the best reasons of State. A million livres was secretly[2] given to Beaumarchais to establish a commercial house, for the purpose of supplying America with arms, munitions, and military equipments. The arsenals were to be open to this house; but it was bound to replace or to pay for the articles delivered to it. The Americans were to repay these advances in produce, with the necessary time and facilities (June, 1776). Beaumarchais obtained a second million from the Spanish government on the recommendation of the cabinet of Versailles, and three millions more from the ship-owners with whom he was associated, and launched into an enterprise in which the lover of progress and the sympathizer blended strangely in him with the speculator. He loved every thing, — renown, money, philosophy, pleasure, and noise above all else. Other commercial houses were likewise assisted with money for the same purpose. The American agent, Silas Deane, who had arrived meanwhile at Paris, was *officially* refused the two hundred cannon, and the arms and equipments for twenty-five thousand men, which he solicited

[1] June 10, 1776, orders were given to fit out twenty ships of the line at Brest and Rochefort. September 27, a series of ordinances appeared, which reformed the administration of the marine; abolished the exorbitant power of clerks and officials; placed every thing concerning the direction and execution of maritime works again under the direction of military officers; determined the form and functions of the permanent councils and the extraordinary council of the marine, eventually commissioned by the King to inquire into the conduct and operations of the commanders of squadrons, divisions, and detached vessels (an institution indispensable for the purpose of enforcing upon the naval commanders the sense of the responsibility which they had sometimes so shamefully evaded under Louis XV.), etc. The chief merit of these reforms appears to have belonged to the Chevalier de Fleurieu, the director of the ports and arsenals, whom the minister Sartine had had the good sense to take as a counsellor. — See the ordinances in the *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 141; and the criticism thereon in L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 386. One of the best provisions was that which joined the port-officers, or *officiers bleus*, plebeians for the most part, with the *ship-officers*, sprung from the privileged body of the marine guards, and caused the *port-officers* to take rank after the *ship-officers* of the same grade. The division of the marine into two bodies, one of which overpowered the other with its pride, had been productive of the worst results.

[2] This was a secret even to the Americans. According to a letter from M. de Vergennes to the King, May 2, 1776 (see Flassan, t. VII. p. 149), direct pecuniary assistance was transmitted to Congress, under cover of some one by the name of Montaudoin.

Digitized by Google

from France, but was *semi-officially* referred to Beaumarchais, who procured every thing, even to artillery and engineering officers, with the cannon, to aid the Americans in making use of them. Among the officers of different arms of the service who enlisted through this medium are remarked the names of Casimir Pulaski, the Polish hero, and La Rouarie, who was afterwards the first organizer of the counter-revolutionary insurrection of La Vendée.[1]

The news from beyond the sea during the year 1776 became more and more exciting. Intelligence arrived that the Americans had abandoned the British flag, and had adopted a banner with thirteen stripes, — the token of the alliance of the *Thirteen United States*. Boston was free: as early as March, the British troops had been forced to evacuate this generous city,[2] and to reëmbark for Nova Scotia. In May, on learning that an army of foreign mercenaries had been despatched to America, the General Congress published a manifesto, demonstrating to the colonies the necessity of wholly abolishing British authority; and addressed to all the colonial assemblies the same recommendation which it had made the year before to Massachusetts; namely, to adopt the form of government best suited to the good of their constituents in particular, and of the *Union* in general.[3]

July 4, 1776, a date which will never be effaced from the memory of man, appeared the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, framed by Franklin, Jefferson, John Adams, etc.

The preamble and conclusions of this document were the *Social Contract* in practice: —

"When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

[1] Loménie, *Beaumarchais*, etc. The majority, according to the testimony of La Fayette, were adventurers, who met with little success on the other side of the ocean.

[2] The popularity of the name of Boston, in France, was signalized by an incident stamped with that frivolity which we mix with the most serious things. For the English game of *whist*, already in possession of a vogue which it has regained in our day, was substituted another game, called *Boston*.

[3] Among the numerous writings which called forth this great resolution was the

Digitized by Google

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." . . .

An exposition of the grievances which reduced the American colonies to the necessity of making use of this supreme right ensued: —

"*We therefore, the representatives of the United States of America* in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do. And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

Such was the certificate of the birth of the freest, and, it will soon be said, the largest community that ever existed upon earth.[1] The union of Protestant Christianity and the philosophy of the eighteenth century had engendered this great progeny. Two first-class men were to be the saviors and guides of its infancy, each of them especially representing a phase of its double

celebrated pamphlet, *Common Sense*, by that Thomas Paine, who, after contributing to the American Revolution, went to take part in that of France.

[1] The *Act of Union* of the thirteen States was published three months after the *Declaration of Independence* (October 4, 1776). Each State remained the master of its constitution and internal administration. To the General Congress belonged the right to make war and peace; all foreign relations; the coinage of money; the weights and measures; the mails; the apportionment and use of the national taxes; in fine, every thing concerning the army and navy.

Digitized by Google

origin, — Washington, tradition, but progressive and reformed tradition, enlightened and tolerant Protestantism; Franklin, the spirit of the age, the movement from Locke to Rousseau, philosophy, but religious philosophy.

The young Republic still had severe trials to endure. At the very moment that the Declaration of Independence appeared, the British army and fleet returned reënforced from Nova Scotia, and attacked the islands of the State of New York. *Loyalist* plots broke out in the interior. The treason of the anti-national minority was suppressed by the necessary rigor; but the enemy's army at first met with great successes. Despite their courage and the military talents of their leader, the American militia succumbed before the discipline of the Anglo-Germans. They lost a battle on Long Island, and were compelled to evacuate New York. The English also invaded New Jersey and Rhode Island. The cause of liberty seemed at the last extremity. The army of Washington was for a moment reduced to three thousand soldiers, destitute of every thing. The American general reorganized his army, and baffled misfortune by prodigies of constancy. His admirable operations during the winter of 1776–1777 revived the courage of his fellow-citizens. He returned to New Jersey; held the greatly superior forces of the British in check; and covered Philadelphia, the seat of Congress. From this first campaign could be estimated the worth of this man, a mixture of Fabius and Epaminondas;[1] resembling, as has been so well said,[2] those monuments whose greatness does not impress one at the first glance, precisely on account of the perfect harmony of their proportions, and because no part astonishes the eye. "The most rational of great men,"[3] he was truly the personification of the most rationalistic of nations; and his *august good sense*, to use the happy expression of one of our contemporaries,[4] was only the distinctive quality of the Anglo-Americans carried to sublimity.

Meanwhile, the other glory of America, Franklin, had quitted his country in order the better to serve it. After aiding in framing the immortal *Declaration*, he had set out to gain the French alliance. He landed at Nantes, December 17, 1776. The United

[1] Epaminondas, without, however, the poetic and artistic tendency possessed by the Theban, as by almost all the great men of Greece.

[2] Théod. Fabas, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, art. WASHINGTON. This article, and the article UNITED STATES, by the same author and in the same collection, are two of the best fragments of philosophical history that have been written in our day.

[3] Theod. Fabas.

[4] Eugène Pelletan.

Digitized by Google

States had admirably chosen their plenipotentiary. Sprung from those working-classes brought to light and elevated in public opinion by Diderot; not a Protestant, like the great body of his countrymen, but a philosophic Deist, of an intermediate shade between Voltaire and Rousseau; a physicist of the first order in this age, so much enamoured with the natural sciences; as simple in his manners and costume as Jean-Jacques and his heroes, yet the wittiest and most acute of men; of a mind wholly French in tone and grace; a marvellous mixture of probity and ability, both of the highest degree; at once the great man of antiquity in certain aspects, and preëminently the man of modern times; redeeming as far as possible what he lacked in ideality by that excellent moral equilibrium which he had in common with Washington, but more varied, more comprehensive, and less austere than the latter, he was adapted to captivate, as he captivated the France of the eighteenth century, by all his sentiments and all his ideas. He won the wise men by the good sense of his genius; the enthusiasts by the brilliancy of his rôle; the frivolous by the originality of his position and appearance. He was in a few days as popular at Paris as at Boston or Philadelphia.

While Franklin labored to gain the French government after French society, and to change the indirect support into a declared alliance, the aid from France began to arrive. Nine vessels freighted by Beaumarchais landed very opportunely at Portsmouth in New Hampshire in April, 1777. A few weeks after, another ship landed on the coast of South Carolina a young man of twenty, a great French nobleman, who had put aside all obstacles, the anger of his family, the express prohibition of the King, and, what was far more difficult to brave, the grief of a young wife, tenderly loved and on the point of becoming a mother, to hasten to offer his sword to the new Republic. This was that La Fayette who was destined to set to Europe, agitated by the perpetual flux and reflux of opinions and interests and degraded by the versatility of minds, the illustrious example of a political constancy of sixty years, and to die in 1834 such as he had revealed himself in 1777 on the shores of America. His steadfast devotion to liberty may have erred at times as to the choice of the path in the darkest hours of our storms; but never for a single day did it forsake its end.

The young French officer, immediately appointed major-general in Washington's army by Congress, shared the rude labors of his leader with an intelligent valor, and an abnegation which the

Digitized by Google

great man repaid by unreserved confidence and affection! The enemy had made preparations for powerful efforts. A second British army, which had descended from Canada and made itself master of Lake Champlain, advanced towards Albany and the upper part of the Hudson, under the command of General Burgoyne. Had General Howe, who was confronting Washington on the Delaware, coöperated with Burgoyne at the lower part of the Hudson, America would have been cut in twain, and the republican cause reduced to the most extreme peril. Happily, General Howe turned in the opposite direction, embarked for Chesapeake Bay, and went to attack Philadelphia in the rear. Washington lost the battle of the Brandywine (September 11, 1777), and was compelled to abandon to him the city which had been the seat of Congress. This success, however, was more brilliant than substantial. Washington maintained his ground at a short distance from Philadelphia, and continued to occupy General Howe. During these operations, Burgoyne, who had begun successfully, and had triumphantly made his way from the valley of the Great Lakes into that of the Hudson, was arrested in the forests and mountains of the upper part of the Hudson by the American generals, Gates and Arnold. After a long series of battles, Burgoyne, hemmed in and decimated, capitulated with all his army (October 17, 1777).

The effect was prodigious in Europe. It became more and more difficult for the French government to maintain the equivocal position which it had assumed. The English were incessantly renewing their bitter complaints concerning the presence of the agents of the *rebels* in France,[1] the welcome given to the American privateers in French ports, and the shipments and expeditions despatched from France in behalf of the *rebels*. The cabinet of Versailles disavowed the shipments, and caused them sometimes to be suspended; expelled the privateers, which, sent away from one port, entered another;[2] declared that it tolerated the agents of Congress only as simple private individuals; and recriminated against the violations of the flag and the vexatious search of French vessels, which the English ventured upon on the very coasts of France. July 4, 1777, the minister of the marine signified to the chambers of commerce that he should protect and reclaim the

[1] In 1776, the English cabinet had demanded the extradition of Silas Deane, a *rebellious subject* of his Britannic Majesty. The answer need not be told. — See full details concerning the diplomacy, in Flassan, t. VII. liv. vi.

[2] These privateers were, for the most part, French, mixed with a few Americans.

Digitized by Google

vessels seized by the English on the pretext of commerce with America; and squadrons were fitted out at Toulon and Brest. The minister of foreign affairs, meanwhile, in an official reply to the cabinet of St. James, July 15, still protested the fidelity of France to the existing treaties. England answered by proposing a treaty of mutual guarantee for the security of the possessions of the two crowns in America.

This impertinent proposition was received with the disdain which it deserved: but the position was no longer tenable; it was consistent neither with dignity nor safety. Affairs had changed since Turgot's memorial to the King, and his counsels were no longer applicable. On one hand, the union of the two Englands against us was now to be dreaded, not if we made war, but if we did not make it. The English might at any moment recognize the independence of the United States, as the price of an offensive alliance against France.[1] On the other hand, the Americans had taken the great step: it was with an organized republic that we now had to treat; a republic which, once sure of the French alliance, would see in this alliance the guarantee of its national independence, and would no more renounce it than independence itself.

The American agents redoubled their entreaties, seconded by an immense pressure of public opinion. Every one was carried away by the torrent; after the public, the court, and even the familiars of the Queen. The King, the Queen, and the ministers were almost the only ones who resisted: Maurepas and Vergennes through timidity; Necker through financial spirit and a foreboding of pecuniary difficulties; the King and Queen through monarchical instinct; and Louis, besides, through conscientious scruples concerning the lawfulness of the war. Louis yielded reluctantly, and the last; but he yielded;[2] conditionally, however, as will be seen. December 16, 1777, on the intelligence of the disaster to Burgoyne, Maurepas took courage;[3] and M. de Vergennes informed the three commissioners of Congress, Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, that the King had decided to recognize the independ-

[1] Many Americans inclined to this course through the remembrance of their origin. General Gates, the conqueror of Burgoyne, wrote to this purport to influential Englishmen.—Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 262.

[2] A jest in very bad taste proved that he did not share the general enthusiasm for Franklin. — See *Mém. de madame Campan*, t. I. p. 234. He afterwards, however, expressed admiration for Washington.

[3] *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. p. 77.

Digitized by Google

ence of their country, and to conclude with them a commercial treaty and a contingent defensive alliance.

A double treaty was signed in consequence, February 6, 1778. The first decreed that there should be peace and friendship between France and the United States of America. The contracting parties promised to treat each other mutually, as to commercial intercourse, on the footing of the most favored nation, and to protect each other reciprocally upon the seas. France engaged to interfere with the Barbary States to insure their respect to the American flag. The *droit d'aubaine* was abolished on both sides. The vessels of each power might trade at full liberty with the enemies of the other, only excepting articles contraband of war. Any Frenchman who should take out letters of marque from a foreign power against the United States, or any American against France, should be punished as a pirate. The Most Christian King should grant to the subjects of the United States one or several free ports, where they might bring and sell any produce or merchandise from the said thirteen States.

By the second treaty, the two parties provided for the contingency that Great Britain, "through resentment for the intimacy and good understanding" which the preceding treaty had just established, should break the peace with France. "In case that war should be declared between France and Great Britain" during the existing war between the United States and England, his Majesty and the United States were to make common cause. The essential and direct aim of the present defensive alliance was efficiently to maintain the liberty, sovereignty, and independence of the United States, both with respect to government and to commerce. The two parties were, each on its side, and in the manner which it might judge most suitable, to use every effort in their power against the common enemy. In case that either party should undertake any separate enterprise in which it should need the coöperation of the other, the aid to be furnished and the compensating advantages were to be regulated by a separate agreement. In case that the United States should see fit to attempt the reduction of the British power still remaining in the northern part of America or in the Bermuda islands, these countries or islands, in the event of success, were to be confederated with the United States, and to be under their jurisdiction. His Most Christian Majesty forever renounced the possession of any part of the continent of North America which was then or had been recently under the power of the King and crown of Great Britain. In

Digitized by Google

case that his Most Christian Majesty should see fit to attack any of the islands in the Gulf of Mexico, or near this gulf, which were then under the power of Great Britain, all of the said islands, in the event of success, were to belong to the crown of France. Neither of the two powers was to conclude peace or truce with Great Britain, without first obtaining the formal consent of the other; and both parties mutually engaged not to lay down their arms until the independence of the United States had been insured by the treaty or treaties which should terminate the war. His Most Christian Majesty and the United States agreed to invite or to permit other powers, who might have experienced wrongs on the part of England, to accede to the present alliance. The two powers mutually guaranteed to each other forever,— to wit, the United States to his Most Christian Majesty the existing possessions of the crown of France in America, as well as those which it might acquire by the future treaty of peace; and his Most Christian Majesty to the United States their sovereignty, liberty, independence, etc., as well as their possessions, and the accessions or conquests which their confederation might obtain, during the war, of any of the States possessed then or formerly by Great Britain in America.[1]

This contingent alliance, this evasive manner of provoking a collision which had become inevitable, was in some manner strange and unworthy; but it had been necessary, in order to overcome the scruples of the timorous Louis XVI., to suppose a material aggression of the English prior to any collective action against them.

Another important observation should be made concerning this compact of alliance; namely, that the political system now styled *Americanism*, that is, the claim of the United States to exclude the European powers from the American continent, was already strongly indicated by the renunciation of Canada and Nova Scotia, obtained from France.

At the news of this second *treaty of Paris*, which was about to annihilate that of 1763, so fatal to France and so glorious to England, the English cabinet, in consternation, made a last effort to compound with the Americans, the most serious one that it had yet attempted. It no longer talked of *pardon*, but of a *treaty* with Congress. Lord North presented to the parliament a plan of reunion and accommodation based upon the representation of the colonies in parliament (February 17, 1778).

[1] See the treaty in Martens, *Recueil de Traités*, t. II. p. 587, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

It was too late. A people never retracts such an act as the *Declaration of Independence*. Congress refused to negotiate so long as the enemy's armies and fleets had not quitted the United States, and their independence had not been formally recognized (April 22).

March 13, the ambassador from France had notified the cabinet of St. James of the treaty of amity and commerce signed between France and the United States of North America, "who were in full possession of the independence proclaimed by their declaration of July 4, 1776." His Most Christian Majesty thought it incumbent upon him to inform the court of London that the contracting parties had stipulated for no commercial advantage in favor of France which the United States were not at liberty to grant equally to any other nation. The King was persuaded that the court of London would find in this communication new proofs of his Majesty's disposition for peace; and that his Britannic Majesty, animated by the same sentiments, would take efficient measures to prevent the disturbance of the commerce of French subjects with the United States. With this just confidence, the ambassador from France deemed it superfluous to apprise the British ministry that the King, his master, being determined efficiently to protect the lawful liberty of the commerce of his subjects, and to sustain the honor of his flag, his Majesty had taken contingent measures in consequence with the United States of North America.[1]

England replied only by the recall of her ambassador. An embargo was laid on British ships in France (March 18). England retaliated by the same measure. March 21, the three American plenipotentiaries were received in solemn audience by the King at Versailles. Prolonged applause welcomed the representatives of the new republican world to the palace of Louis XIV. Franklin and his colleagues quitted the residence of the King of France only to repair officially to that of the young wife of the man who was destined, eleven years after, to inaugurate the French Revolution on the ruins of the Bastille, — that of Madame de La Fayette.

When La Fayette, at Washington's headquarters, read the words of the French government in the notification of March 13, "*The United States . . . in possession of the independence proclaimed by their declaration of such a day*," — "This is a great

[1] Flassan, t. VII. p. 167.

Digitized by Google

truth," he exclaimed, "which we will remind them of some day at home."[1]

The British parliament, meanwhile, had been the scene of the greatest excitement. It was felt that the tardy propositions of the ministry had no chance of acceptance from America. A fraction of the Opposition proposed to recognize the independence of the colonies. At this intelligence, the aged Lord Chatham, sick and exhausted, caused himself to be carried from his bed to the House of Lords; and there, pale, wrapped in his coverings as in a winding-sheet, and leaning upon his son, who was to be the second Pitt, he protested with despair against the idea of the dismemberment of the British empire,—against the separation of those Anglo-Americans whom he had defended against arbitrary power as British citizens, but whom he would never recognize as an independent nation. He conjured his fellow-countrymen to perish rather than humble the flag of England before the House of Bourbon. One of the leaders of the Opposition, the Duke of Richmond, having hinted that England was unable to sustain a collision with the House of Bourbon united with the Americans, and continuing to insist on the necessity of recognizing the independence of the United States and maintaining peace with France, Lord Chatham, transported with indignation, rose from his seat to reply; but the violence of the feelings which agitated him had destroyed his remaining strength, and he fell fainting. He was carried away amidst general consternation. He languished a few weeks, then expired.

The death of this powerful enemy of France seemed a fatal sign to England. He seemed to carry away with him the fortunes of his country.

There was no longer reason for hesitation. The French government had already suffered the season most favorable for the commencement of hostilities to escape. It was necessary to choose carefully where to direct the blows, and to strike hard and swiftly. April 15, a squadron of twelve ships and five frigates set sail from Toulon under the command of Vice-Admiral d'Estaing, the last officer who had sustained the honor of the French flag on the seas in the deplorable Seven-Years' War.[2]

[1] *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. p. 177.

[2] After the fall of the French settlements in India, when our flag had disappeared from the Eastern seas, D'Estaing, setting out from the Isle of France with one of the Indian Company's vessels and a small frigate, captured and destroyed the English factories on the Persian Gulf, then those of Sumatra, and took several of the ships belonging to the English East-India Company.— See L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 346.

Digitized by Google

This squadron carried to America a minister plenipotentiary accredited to Congress by Louis XVI., Gérard de Rainеval, who had been the signer of the two treaties of February 6.

The instructions of M. Gérard, dated March 30, were, among others, to decline all requests for subsidies, to see that the military operations were concerted with Count d'Estaing, and to avoid explicit engagements relative to the conquest of Canada and other British possessions. The cabinet of Versailles was not sorry for the United States to retain in their neighborhood some cause of anxiety which would make them feel the value of the French alliance. Washington, through other motives, aided the French minister on this point, and showed that it was necessary to liberate the territory of the thirteen confederated States before acting abroad. The French government yielded with respect to the subsidies; at least, it advanced three millions in 1778, and other sums during the following year.[1]

The despatch of the squadron from Toulon was an excellent measure; but this was the only good thing that was done. The King and the special ministers were alike incapable of viewing the war on a large scale, and of making skilful plans for the campaign. The minister of the marine, Sartine, had shown activity,[2] and issued useful regulations; but his views did not exceed the *matériel* of the administration in time of peace. As to the ministry of war, it was no longer filled by the aged Saint-Germain, who, worn out, and fallen into discredit by his eccentricities and inconsistencies, had resigned his office at the beginning of September, 1777,[3] and had been replaced by a personage of very little value, the Prince de Montbarrei, who was ruled by obscure influences and female intrigues. No advantage was therefore taken of the fact that England, herself indifferently governed,

[1] Garden, *Histoire des traités de paix*, t. IV. pp. 301–387; one million in 1779, four millions in 1780, four millions in 1781, and six millions in 1782.

[2] In June, 1778, we had sixty-four men-of-war of from fifty to a hundred and fifty guns (*Mercure de France*, June, 1778). These sixty-four ships had been left us by Choiseul, with fifty frigates.

[3] He died January 15, 1778. His only acts of any importance, after the fall of the great reformatory minister, which he survived for some time, were the disorganization of the Hôtel des Invalides (he left only fifteen hundred men therein, and dispersed the rest throughout the provinces, June 17, 1776), and the reorganization of the Military School (July 17, 1777) on a somewhat singular plan. This was the formation of a corps of cadets of noble birth, who paid for their tuition; to which were added gratuitously the best pupils of the new military colleges founded in the provinces in the place of the old school. — See *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 58. The idea of making the King the *keeper of a boarding-school* was greatly ridiculed.

Digitized by Google

was not ready for war. The cabinet of Versailles, including M. de Vergennes, began by not seeing that war was inevitable, and flattering itself that England would draw back; then, the conflict once certain, it did not realize the necessity of commencing hostilities vigorously on the spot, and striving to destroy the main props of the enemy, — America and India. The royal government never would understand any thing of India. The immense progress of the English, who were realizing in Hindostan, under Clive and Hastings, the plans of Dupleix and Bussi, with the addition of crime, could not arouse the cabinet of Louis XVI. from its heedlessness. The favorable circumstances, and the advantage which France might derive from an alliance with Hyder Ali, that Mussulman hero who had founded a great state in the south of the peninsula, and imposed a disadvantageous peace upon the English presidency of Madras in 1769, were nevertheless well known at Versailles. Nothing was sent to India; and the powerful fleet which had been fitted out at Brest was retained for several weeks inactive, because the old King of Spain, Carlos III., had offered his mediation instead of his assistance. The Spanish government had been very willing to participate in the indirect aid furnished by France to the *insurgents;* but it felt much hesitation in openly espousing their cause: the example seemed too dangerous to its own colonies.

England replied to the offer of mediation, that it was necessary, first of all, that France should withdraw her note of March 13.[1] Even after this answer, Louis XVI. still hesitated to order the fleet to set sail from Brest: he was still unwilling to fire the first gun; a scruple the more puerile, inasmuch as it was impossible that D'Estaing would not come to blows in the American waters.

The *first gun* was at length fired. The English were the first to appear in our waters. An English fleet of twenty ships, under the command of Admiral Keppel, while reconnoitring near Brest, encountered two French frigates off the Island of Ushant (June 17). War not being declared, Keppel did not immediately attack the frigates, but summoned them to lay to at his stern, and answer his questions. The more advanced of the frigates, the *Licorne*, refused. He fired upon her: she discharged a broadside, then surrendered. The second frigate, the *Belle Poule*, commanded by La Clochetterie, crowded sail in order to escape: pursued and overtaken near the coast by the English frigate *Arethusa*, she disabled the latter after five hours' conflict, forced her

[1] Flassan, t. VII. p. 171.

Digitized by Google

to retire to the fleet, and returned victorious to Brest amidst the acclamations of the navy and the populace.

Thus was inaugurated the American War.

Keppel, informed of the superiority of the French fleet by the papers found on the *Licorne*, returned to Portsmouth. The fleet of Brest, under the command of Lieutenant-General d'Orvilliers, at length set sail, July 8. Its long delay had permitted the merchant fleets from the English West Indies and the Levant peacefully to regain the English ports, and to carry thither great resources in men and merchandise. It was thirty-two ships of the line strong, and was divided into three squadrons, commanded, the first by D'Orvilliers in person; the second by Lieutenant-General Duchaffaut; and the third by the young Duke de Chartres, who had for his adviser Commodore La Motte-Piquet. July 23, the French fleet encountered the enemy between the Island of Ushant and the Scilly Isles. Keppel, reënforced, had again put to sea. After four days of skilful evolutions, which attested the progress of our navy in tactics since the peace of 1763,[1] the two naval armies engaged on the morning of July 27. They numbered each thirty ships; two of our vessels having been separated from the fleet by accident. The English had more three-deckers than we. Special historians have described the admirable manœuvres of this action, hotly disputed for some hours. The English were forced to acknowledge with anguish the superiority of our marine artillery, reorganized by Choiseul. In the afternoon, the French admiral made an attempt to break the enemy's line, which should have been decisive: unfortunately, his signal was not immediately understood by the squadron commanded by the Duke de Chartres. The duke went in person to ask explanations from D'Orvilliers, then returned to execute the orders of his superior. But precious time had been lost: the English fleet was not separated, but was only arrested in a movement which it had begun. It formed anew beyond the range of the cannon, and did not return to the charge, although it had the weather-gauge, and the French were awaiting it. The greater part of the English ships were dismasted, and almost unable to manœuvre. The next day the English repaired to Plymouth, and the French to Brest.

The victory, therefore, remained incomplete; but it was certainly much for a navy, burdened by the recollections of the

[1] D'Orvilliers had for a major-general Du Pavillon, the inventor of a new system of naval tactics, which introduced the most decisive improvements into the language of signals.— See *Biographie universelle*, art. Du Pavillon, by M. de Rossel.

Digitized by Google

Seven-Years' War, to have repulsed with advantage, with equal, or even with somewhat inferior forces, the principal English fleet, admirably commanded. The first intelligence of the action of Ushant was therefore received with anger at London, and with rejoicing at Paris. The Duke de Chartres, who returned to Paris while the fleet was undergoing repairs at Brest, was covered with applause at the Opera, and the houses were illuminated in his honor around the Palais-Royal. In a few days, however, accusing rumors effected a reaction in public opinion. It was pretended that the prince had shown nothing but hesitation, and want of spirit; and that he had neither obeyed the admiral, nor listened to the counsel of the commodore, La Motte-Piquet, commissioned to be his guide, under the title of his second in command. Some went so far as to say that he had been concealed at the bottom of the hold. The truth of these rumors was, that the admiral, D'Orvilliers, had written to the minister of the marine that "the want of attention of the first ships of this squadron (that of the Duke de Chartres) to his signals had alone deprived the French flag of the most brilliant triumph in the action of July 27." But it was not the less true, that La Motte-Piquet, one of the bravest and most able mariners possessed by France, far from throwing the blame on the Duke de Chartres, took upon himself the reproach of the admiral, and justified himself with great warmth. It is very possible that no one was to blame in the affair, and that the delay in the manœuvring proceeded from the difficulties of the new system of signals, the use of which had not yet become familiar. The charge of cowardice against the Duke de Chartres was unjust: this prince was lacking in strength of soul and moral dignity, but not in physical courage.

This incident was destined to be productive of the gravest consequences in the future. The Duke de Chartres imputed to the Queen and her familiars the propagation of rumors injurious to his honor; and already at variance with the Queen, after relations of great friendliness at first, he conceived an implacable hatred of her, which was to be alike fatal to both.

The immediate consequences had already been vexatious. The admiral and the minister of the marine agreed in endeavoring to induce the prince to quit his military command. The King was unwilling to remove him abruptly. These dissensions retarded the departure of the fleet. Meanwhile the English were capturing our merchant-men on all sides, owing to the culpable negligence of the minister of the marine, who had protected them

Digitized by Google

neither by cruisers nor escorts:[1] none of the English convoys, on the contrary, were disturbed. The fleet set sail again, August 17. The Duke de Chartres had obtained permission to reappear therein temporarily, to cover his disgrace; but he soon caused himself to be recalled to Brest, and exchanged his rank as lieutenant-general of the navy for that of colonel-general of hussars.

The fleet made a third sortie. This time it was forced to return through lack of men and money (October 8). The men had not been paid for several months. Sartine, in his correspondence with the admiral, threw the responsibility of this on Necker, who afterwards, in turn, with more probability, accused the minister of the marine of disorder and waste. A few cruisers were finally sent to the aid of commerce, and we began to take prizes in our waters, which this year were far from indemnifying us for those of the enemy.

This first campaign in European waters had therefore been sterile, or even injurious, in its material result, honorable to our navy in its moral effect,[2] and dishonorable to the government, which showed itself greatly inferior to the emergency.[3]

Its culpable negligence had been productive of consequences in India, which might easily have been foreseen. At the first news, not of war, but of the imminence of war, the Supreme Council of Calcutta, which governed British India, suddenly attacked the little that remained to the French in those vast regions (July, 1778). Chandernagore, and the factories of Masulipatam and Karikal, surrendered without striking a blow. An army and a small squadron proceeded to Pondicherry, which the French had rebuilt from its ruins. A small French squadron, equal in force to that of the English (five ships of from twenty-four to sixty-four guns on each side), engaged in an indecisive action (August 10). A few days after, the French commodore, Tronjoli, quited the roadstead of Pondicherry, and set sail for the Isle of France, pretending that he was unable either to revictual on the coast, or to wait for reënforcements, as the English were about to be rëen-

[1] The enemy captured prizes to the value of more than forty million, and carried off many of our sailors.

[2] There were several admirable single engagements. Two French frigates took two English frigates of equal or superior strength. A French ship forced an English ship and frigate to retreat. — L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 430.

[3] See the details of the campaign in L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. pp. 405–432; *Hist. impartiale de la dernière guerre* (by De Lonchamps), t. I. p. 349, *et seq.*, Amsterdam and Paris, 1785; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, by Fr. Soulès, t. III. pp. 81–101, Paris, 1787; Adolphus, *History of England under George III.*, book xxxv.

Digitized by Google

forced and to overpower him.[1] However culpable this officer may have been, the ministry was at least as culpable as he. The brave Governor of Pondicherry, Bellecombe, abandoned in an almost defenceless place, with a weak garrison, did not capitulate until after seventy days' siege and forty days' intrenchment, and then on condition of being carried to France with his companions in arms (October 17, 1778).

A few months after (March 29, 1779), the English took possession of Mahé almost without striking a blow. This place, so strong by its position alone, had neither soldiers nor munitions. The French flag disappeared once more from India.

It at least floated with honor in the American waters!

The squadron which had sailed from Toulon under Vice-Admiral d'Estaing, detained by contrary winds, had been nearly three months in reaching the mouth of the Delaware (April 13–July 7). This delay saved the British army which was occupying Philadelphia, and which had time to reëmbark and to make its way to New York. Had D'Estaing arrived three weeks sooner, the army and squadron of Admiral Howe would have been shut up, as if in a snare, between Washington's army and the French squadron, superior in numbers. The new allies attempted to indemnify themselves for the loss of this glorious opportunity. A double attack by land and sea was planned against Rhode Island, an important maritime position held by the enemy, in the heart of the United States. The narrows leading to Newport, the capital of the State, were brilliantly forced by D'Estaing,[2] seconded by excellent officers, among whom was signalized Suffren, destined to a great and speedy renown. A British ship, five frigates, and a corvette, were burned by their commanders, to avoid falling into the power of the assailants. The French were about to land in order to coöperate with the Americans, who had already made a descent on Rhode Island, when the squadron of Admiral Howe, reënforced by several vessels, was signalled. D'Estaing passed through the channel anew to meet the British fleet, which fled before him, and which he overtook. The signal for battle was about to be given, when a furious storm, which lasted forty hours, separated the two squadrons, tossed them about, and shattered them (August 11–13). The tempest calmed,

[1] The English were greatly superior on the land; but their naval forces were very indifferent at this moment in those waters.

[2] He had previously captured thirty merchant-men and transports, and fifteen hundred British recruits.

Digitized by Google

D'Estaing's ship, dismasted, and razed like a hulk, escaped the attack of a vessel of the enemy only through the indomitable firmness of the French admiral. D'Estaing rallied his ships; but he believed it impossible to resume operations against Newport, and set sail for Boston; which compelled the Americans to raise the siege of Newport, and to evacuate Rhode Island.

This want of success of an enterprise so well begun threatened to break the still fragile alliance of the French and the Anglo-Americans. The latter declared themselves abandoned, and almost betrayed. Much bitterness ensued between the leaders, and quarrels between the people and their foreign auxiliaries. La Fayette, whose great military services had invested him with deserved popularity, employed himself with zeal and authority in calming the irritation; and the generous offer made by D'Estaing, to put himself, the Vice-Admiral of France, under the command of a simple lawyer transformed into a general (Sullivan), to act on land with his land forces, effaced the ill-founded resentment. The concord was not again disturbed during the rest of the war.

D'Estaing, in conformity with his instructions, after aiding in putting Boston in a posture of defence against the British navy, powerfully reënforced, soon after quitted the shores of the United States for the West Indies, where he found the French colonies rejoicing over an important conquest. The Governor of the Windward Islands, that Marquis de Bouillé who was destined to play an important part in the counter-revolutionary party, had just effected a descent on the Island of Dominica, and forced the English garrison to surrender after a feeble resistance (September 6–8); thus ridding Guadeloupe and Martinique of a most dangerous proximity. Unhappily, this advantage was counterbalanced by the loss of the Island of St. Lucia, which was defended only by a handful of soldiers and militia, and which fell into the power of a British squadron (December 13–14). D'Estaing attempted at once to retake St. Lucia with twelve ships against six. He vigorously attacked the enemy's squadron; but the latter, bringing its broadside to bear on him from the bay styled the Great Harbor, under the protection of two land-batteries, by its excellent position and obstinate defence, rendered the superiority of numbers useless. The land-forces were still less successful: destitute of artillery, they failed in their attack on the batteries and the intrenchments, which the English had hastily constructed on heights difficult of access, and beat a retreat after three assaults, abandoning seven or eight hundred dead or wounded (December

Digitized by Google

18). D'Estaing, apprised that a strong squadron of the enemy was expected from the United States, was forced to abandon the enterprise, and to retire to Martinique.

We again experienced in the same year another inevitable loss in America. The British occupied the Islands of St. Peter and Miquelon, the fortification of which had been interdicted by the treaty of 1763; and sent back to France all the population, numbering from two to three thousand souls. They thus held the whole of the great Island of Newfoundland (September, 1778). The events of this winter were to their advantage on the American continent as well as in the West Indies. A double expedition, moving from New York by sea and from Florida by land, invaded the southernmost of the thirteen United States, Georgia, and took possession of the capital, Savannah, and the greater part of the country (December, 1778–January, 1779).

It was not the same in the African waters. In the months of January and February, 1779, a small French squadron retook, from the English, St. Louis in Senegal, ceded by the treaty of 1763; concentrated there the defensive resources of Gorée, which was abandoned as a less advantageous post; and destroyed the English factories at Gambia, Sierra Leone, and along the whole coast, from Cape Blanco to Cape Lopez. The prizes captured amounted to more than fifteen millions.

The material losses counterbalanced each other, and the disasters predicted to the English government by the Opposition had not yet been realized; but it must have deeply wounded British pride, not only that the French navy had shown itself equal to the English navy in the great evolutions of one fleet against another, but that it had had the advantage in almost all the single engagements. A considerable number of English frigates had been conquered by vessels equal or even inferior in strength,[1] and carried in triumph into the French ports.

France became more and more animated in the strife. When La Fayette returned in the American frigate, the *Alliance*, to

[1] The most heroic of these encounters was that of the *Triton*, of thirty guns, with an English ship of forty guns. The French captain, Caluélan, had been borne away mortally wounded; when, learning that his crew were beginning to falter, he ordered himself to be carried again upon deck. "My children," he exclaimed, "I have but a few hours to live: let me not have the pain of dying without seeing you the masters of the English frigate. Come, my children, a last effort, and she is yours!" The Englishman was taken, and Caluélan died contented. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 5. The English royal navy had already lost fifty-six ships in the spring of 1779. — *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Digitized by Google

resume his place in the French army, he did not find in the King and the ministers either the will, or, it must be confessed, the power, to punish his glorious disobedience. The King was friendly: the Queen, with her habitual vivacity, was completely subjugated by the universal enthusiasm inspired by the youthful and illustrious volunteer of liberty (February, 1779).

The naval classes in France had been increased eleven thousand five hundred sailors by the ordinance of January, 1779. The activity of our dock-yards and armaments was not slackened. Our privateers, encouraged by two ordinances of July, 1778, which granted them great advantages, organized on the largest scale, and formed veritable auxiliary squadrons of the royal navy.[1] The corporations recommenced their patriotic gifts. The States of Artois had offered a frigate of thirty-six guns. The British parliament, on its side, had voted an appropriation for seventy thousand soldiers and marines for the year which was just beginning. England foresaw that the number of her enemies was about to increase, and that the *Family Compact* would draw in the King of Spain; while she could not even count upon the active coöperation of Portugal, which would have gladly escaped from its oppressive alliance.[2]

England had hoped to witness the renewal of the Continental diversion which had served her so well in the Seven-Years' War. A great quarrel had arisen in Germany, which might involve France. The Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian Joseph, had died December 30, 1777; and with him had become extinct that *Wilhelmine* branch of Bavaria which had played so important a part in the political and religious history of the Empire. His legal heir was the head of the other Bavarian branch, the *Rodolphine* branch; that is, the Elector-Palatine, Charles Theodore. The Emperor Joseph II., however, who had long cast a covetous glance upon Bavaria, exhumed, both in his own name, as the head of the Empire, and in that of his mother, as the Queen of Bohemia and the Archduchess of Austria, those ancient pretensions which the chaos of the Germanic archives never failed to furnish in like cases. He laid claim to the greater part of the succession, and

[1] A company at Nantes equipped six frigates of thirty-six guns, and two corvettes; and a Bordeaux company fitted out twelve light vessels. The State furnished them with artillery gratuitously, and abandoned to them two-thirds of the prizes: the other third was to go to the fund for invalid sailors.

[2] Portugal had a new king, Don Pedro III. The death of Joseph I. had caused the fall of the celebrated minister, Pombal.

Digitized by Google

wrung from the aged Maria Theresa her consent to the introduction of his troops into Bavaria. The Elector Palatine, who had no legitimate child, suffered himself to be gained over by the promise of a great establishment for his natural son, and ceded almost all the inheritance to Austria (January, 1778), without taking into consideration the rights of his nephew, the Duke of Deux-Ponts. Joseph II. had omitted the aged Frederick from his calculations. The King of Prussia still knew how to mount a horse, and was not the man to permit Austria, without striking a blow, to increase her power by the addition of a large province. He made himself the champion of the heir-presumptive who was sacrificed, — the Duke of Deux-Ponts, — and of the Elector of Saxony, who laid claim to the allodial lands of Bavaria, which were heritable in the female line. He began by prudently sounding the courts of Versailles and St. Petersburg; reminding the one of the treaty of Westphalia, of which it was a guaranty, and setting forth to the other the interest which it had in maintaining the balance of power in Germany. Austria, meanwhile, claimed the contingent assistance of France against Prussia, by virtue of the treaty of 1756; as if this unhappy treaty had made France the slave of all her ambitious schemes.

The French cabinet was in a delicate position. The Queen was beginning to acquire unaccustomed influence with her husband,[1] and did not sufficiently forget that she was born an *Austrian;* a fatal name, which was one day to be the sentence of death to the daughter of Maria Theresa! The remembrance of the counsels of a dying father, and the evident interest of France, nevertheless prevailed over her in part with Louis XVI. Maurepas and Vergennes were anti-Austrian, so far as it comported with the levity of the one and the circumspection of the other. France signified her neutrality to Austria, referring to the Diet of the Empire to know whether or not the treaty of Westphalia had been respected. Nevertheless, in order somewhat to appease the Emperor, who complained bitterly of this *defection*, the government had the weakness secretly to furnish him the subsidy of fifteen millions promised by the treaties.[2] By way of compensation, the French cabinet served Frederick by using its influence at Constantinople

[1] The art of the surgeons had overcome the obstacle which had hitherto rendered their union sterile. She had given to the King, September 19, 1778, a daughter, — Madame, afterwards the Duchess d'Angoulême.

[2] Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 56; *Mém. de Mme. Campan*, t. II. p. 29.

Digitized by Google

to arrest the hostilities which had recommenced between the Russians and the Turks on account of the interpretation given by Catharine II. to the treaty of Kanardschy.[1]

The King of Prussia, certain of having nothing to fear from France, took the offensive, and fell upon Bohemia, which Joseph II. defended in person, assisted by the old generals of the Seven-Years' War (July, 1778). The young Emperor avoided the decisive engagement sought by the aged King. The Prussians, after ravaging Bohemia, returned to Silesia, and wrested from the Austrians the southern extremity of Silesia which they had preserved at the peace of 1763 (September–November). The hostilities, carried on against the wishes of Maria Theresa, went no farther. The Empress-Queen requested the mediation of Russia, then of France; which was a tacit renunciation of her pretensions, or rather those of her son. The basis of the accommodation was agreed upon as early as January, 1779. Joseph II. nevertheless raised up one difficulty after another, until news was received of the agreement which had been signed, March 21, at Constantinople. Turkey had accepted the Russian interpretation of the treaty of Kanardschy, which gave Catharine the Crimea under the shadow of a fictitious independence, and undermined the authority of the Porte over Moldavia and Wallachia; Russia consenting to evacuate the coast of the Black Sea between the Bug and the Dniester, of which she had just taken military occupation. Russia now had her hands free, and could keep the engagements of the compact which bound her to Prussia. Joseph II. resigned himself to necessity. The treaties signed May 10, 1779, at Teschen in Silesia, secured to Austria, for her sole share in the Bavarian succession, the portion of the regency of Burghausen between the Danube, the Inn, and the Salza: all the rest remained the property of the Elector Palatine, with an entailment in favor of the Duke of Deux-Ponts. The Elector of Saxony received a pecuniary indemnity from the Palatine.[2]

From this crisis, which well-nigh absorbed Bavaria in the Austrian monarchy, arose, therefore, a new House of Bavaria, more powerful than the former one, since it united the two Bavarian and Palatine electorates. The French government had not played an heroic part in this affair; but it had avoided a very dan-

[1] The Russians had violated this treaty as early as 1777 by interfering by arms in the Crimean affairs.

[2] See the negotiations in Flassan, t. VII. liv. vii.; Frederick II., *Œuvres posthumes*, t. V.; *Mém. de la guerre de* 1778.

Digitized by Google

gerous snare, preserved the free disposal of all its resources against England, and obtained a good result in Germany. The past experience had not been wholly lost.

Not only had France avoided engaging against new enemies, but she had secured an ally, drawn on by degrees from neutrality to full coöperation. The King of Spain had renewed his attempts at mediation in the beginning of 1779. He had proposed a long truce between England and the United States, — a truce in which France was to interfere, and which would place England and her former colonies respectively in the same position towards each other in which Spain herself and the United Provinces of the Netherlands had stood under the régime of the truce of 1609. This would have been a *de facto* recognition of the United States. England refused. Anticipating this refusal, April 12, 1779, the cabinet of Madrid had signed a contingent agreement to coöperate by arms with France against England. June 16, the ambassador from Spain to London took leave of the cabinet of St. James by a manifesto, which was immediately followed by a declaration of war. In this manifesto, no mention was made of any thing but the private grievances of Spain, founded on the violation of her territory in America, and of her flag in all waters. With the English, such grievances were never lacking. Spain, for fear of the example, avoided allying her cause ostensibly to that of the American insurrection.

It was not until then that France, after a year of war, also issued a manifesto, which was refuted by the celebrated historian Gibbon.[1] The answer of Gibbon called forth new replies, among which was signalized the caustic pen of Beaumarchais. The conqueror of the Maupeou parliament seemed to aspire to become the conqueror of England, and to make this war his personal affair.

The campaign of 1779 had commenced on our coasts by a small expedition against the Island of Jersey (the end of April). The fortuitous arrival of an English squadron thwarted the enterprise, and compelled the little French squadron to take refuge in the Bay of Cancale. The English pursued it thither, and destroyed

[1] About the same time, letters-patent from the King appeared, which did honor to the French government. Louis XVI. forbade the molestation of the English fishermen until further orders, "for the purpose of setting an example of humanity which the King hoped to see followed by the English" (June 5, 1779). — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVI. p. 92. The French government, at the indirect suggestion of Turgot, had previously ordered our sailors to treat the illustrious navigator Cook, should they meet him, *as an officer of an allied power*. Franklin also entreated the Americans to see in Cook and his crew only the *friends of the whole human race*.

Digitized by Google

the vessels of which it was composed, after the crews had taken refuge on shore (May 13). This reverse, which cost us two frigates and a few transports, was compensated for by the delay occasioned to the enemy's squadron, which was carrying assistance to the English army in America, and which was afterwards arrested for a long time by contrary winds, and by the fear of falling among the French fleet from Brest.

The French fleet, thirty ships of the line strong, set sail anew, June 3, under the command of D'Orvilliers. High hopes were built on the greatness of the Franco-Spanish forces, which were far superior to those of England. Spain had had, since the preceding year, sixty ships of the line, thirty-two of which were armed. An army of forty thousand men had been assembled on our coasts, commanded by Lieutenant-General de Vaux. La Fayette was to figure on the staff. The French fleet was to go in search of the Spanish fleet, then to return to embark this army, and to land it on the Isle of Wight and at Portsmouth, while the Spaniards commenced the siege of Gibraltar with their land forces, supported by a squadron. The plan was admirable; but the measures for its execution were very badly taken by the ministry.[1] The transports designed for the descent were separated, half at Havre, and half at St. Malo, which rendered their reunion very difficult.[2] Sartine compelled D'Orvilliers to go too soon to meet the Spaniards, with only three months' provisions; promising to send him a convoy of supply ships when he returned off Ushant, accompanied by the allied fleet. The cabinet of Madrid had not yet broken off officially with England; its armaments were not ready: D'Orvilliers was forced to restrain his impatience for several weeks; and the junction was not effected until July 26.

The naval armies combined then numbered, by the union of the different squadrons, sixty-eight ships of the line, with D'Orvilliers as commander-in-chief. Never had a more imposing force appeared on the seas. The terror was profound in England when it was known that this immense fleet was steering towards the Channel. The English, weakened by the squadrons detached to America and India, had only thirty-eight ships with which to protect the British islands: almost all their regular troops were in the colonies; and their militia, although levied with patriotic zeal, were a weak defence. The agitation in Ireland also aggravated

[1] *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 233.

[2] Preparations for the embarkation of a third corps of eighteen thousand men, designed for a diversion, were made at the same time at Dunkirk.

Digitized by Google

their peril. The old hatred of the Catholic Gaels against the Protestant rulers of English or Scotch origin was no longer alone in question; the Anglo-Irish themselves, indignant at the selfish laws by which England for a century had closed the ports of Ireland for the advantage of English monopoly,[1] threatened to turn against Great Britain the arms which they had just taken up under the pretence of opposing the French invasion; and Ireland already, after the example of America, refused to receive English products. England seemed on the verge of ruin.

The real power of the combined armies did not, however, wholly correspond to the appearance. The incapacity of the Spanish sailors, who remained strangers to the recent progress in naval tactics, greatly diminished the usefulness of their coöperation.[2] On the other hand, the scurvy, that cruel malady which the improvement in hygiene and a rigorous cleanliness, copied somewhat tardily from the English, have now almost banished from our marine, was raging among the French fleet. One vessel alone, the *Ville-de-Paris*, lost two hundred and eighty men! D'Orvilliers saw his only son expire in his arms. His patriotism and pious resignation gave him strength to continue the campaign. August 7, the allied fleets came in sight of Ushant. They did not find there the promised supply-ships. They steered towards the English coast, but, thwarted by the winds, did not see Lizard Point until the 14th.

Here D'Orvilliers received intelligence by a frigate that the plan of an attack on Portsmouth was abandoned, and that the descent was to be effected at Falmouth, at the extremity of Cornwall; an absurd change, as the port and roadstead of Falmouth were equally bad, and incapable of sheltering a fleet. D'Orvilliers, nevertheless, strove at first to overtake the enemy's fleet; but the English admiral Hardy had taken refuge in the roadstead of Plymouth, and nothing could be captured but a sixty-four gunship, a slow sailer (August 17). The east winds forced the combined fleet from the Channel. The English naval army appeared a second time near the Scilly Isles, but only to flee at once at full

[1] Not only were the Irish almost entirely excluded from commerce with the English colonies, but the exportation of their natural products or most important manufactures was interdicted them! The Irish emigrated in great numbers to America: there were many of them in Washington's army. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 84.

[2] If the Spaniards lacked knowledge, they did not lack courage. They were justly proud of a battle fought off Cadiz, in which three Spanish frigates took three English frigates by boarding. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 237.

Digitized by Google

sail. The Franco-Spanish fleet fell back anew on Ushant. Instead of the supply-ships which it had hoped to meet there, it found only an order to return to Brest (September 13).

When means for revictualling the fleet were finally obtained, it was too late again to put to sea. This would not have been the case with the attempt to embark the land forces.

This prodigious display of forces had ended only in humiliating England, by carrying hostile flags into her waters, without her daring to answer the challenge; but no positive result had been obtained, not even that of intercepting the English merchant fleets.[1] The public, unenlightened as to the facts, held the admiral responsible for the incapacity of the minister of the marine. "D'Orvilliers, overwhelmed by his paternal grief much more than by the injustice of men, abandoned the service, and went to end his days far from the world."[2] This skilful tactician had needed nothing but more favorable opportunities and a more intelligent ministerial direction to take rank among our greatest mariners.

England, escaped from the threats of invasion, averted part of her dangers by finally rendering justice to Ireland, at least in

[1] La Fayette had proposed, immediately upon his arrival, to go to subject the rich cities of Liverpool, Bristol, etc., which were almost defenceless, to ransom. "The economy and timidity of the ministers," he says, "caused the failure of this bold stroke." The great seaport-town of Portsmouth was not better defended, and might certainly have been destroyed. — *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 340.

[2] L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 463; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. pp. 197–213, 223–229. Shortly after the return of the fleet, one of the most heroic single engagements ever recorded in maritime annals took place at the entrance of the Channel. The conflict between the two frigates, the *Surveillante* and the *Québec* (October 6, 1779), was a duel of giants. The terrible and touching story should be read in the *Histoire maritime* of Léon Guérin, t. II. p. 465, *et seq.* The forces, valor, and ability were equal. Fortune decided in favor of the French. The English frigate sunk in flames with its intrepid commander, Farmer. The shattered remnants of the crew were picked up and treated like brothers by the French, whose own ship was filled to overflowing with dead and wounded, and was stripped of all its masts. The return of the *Surveillante* to Brest was at once a triumph and a funeral procession. Her captain, De Coudic, whose courage and humanity had been sublime, died three months afterwards of his wounds. The English were sent home free, as not having surrendered. The English did not afterwards show this magnanimity to the wrecks of the heroic crew of the *Vengeur*. The French privateers, who, by virtue of an ordinance rendered under Choiseul's ministry in 1765, now had the right to carry the white flag, like the royal navy, signalized themselves by numerous exploits during the campaign of 1779. A fellow-countryman of Jean Bart, Royer, a native of Dunkirk, above all rendered himself terrible to the English navy, and took an enormous quantity of prizes. The French privateers, fitted out as actual frigates, swept away before them the little English privateers. — See *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 234, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

commercial matters, and removing the prohibitions of exportation and of trade with the colonies (December, 1779).

The campaign had been more fruitful in the West Indies than in Europe. June 16, a small squadron, sent from Martinique by D'Estaing, had landed three or four hundred soldiers or volunteers on the British island of St. Vincent. The garrison and militia of the island were greatly superior in numbers to the assailants; but the Caribs of St. Vincent, the last relics of the primitive population of the West Indies, who remembered having been cruelly oppressed by the English and protected by the French, hastened to join the besiegers; and the English capitulated. D'Estaing then repaired to the Island of Grenada with all his fleet, which had been increased by reënforcements to twenty-five ships of from fifty to eighty guns. He landed in person with thirteen hundred soldiers, without artillery (July 2); and, on the night of July 3–4, carried by assault the height of L'Hôpital, an abrupt and strongly intrenched position, which commanded the town and the other forts of Grenada. It was a retaliation for St. Lucia. The governor surrendered at discretion. Two days after, the English fleet of Admiral Byron, twenty-one ships of the line strong, appeared in sight of Grenada, which it came too late to succor. Had the English flag been left on the forts of Grenada, the fleet would have posted itself between the fire of the forts and that of our vessels. Unhappily, this strategem was neglected; and the English fleet, which might have been destroyed, was only repulsed with some loss. A ship of sixty guns, belonging to Beaumarchais, signalized itself among the vessels of the royal navy. The *Fier-Rodrigue* had been fitted out for the purpose of convoying the merchant-men despatched to America by its owner. The fact is curious enough to deserve mention in history.[1]

After these conquests, which secured to the French a decided superiority in the West Indies, D'Estaing returned to succor the allies of France, and went to join the Carolinians in an attack on Savannah, the capital of Georgia, which had been taken by the British during the preceding winter. The British detachments scattered over Georgia succeeded in throwing themselves into the place, which was obstinately defended. The besieged, reënforced by many of the slaves, almost equalled the besiegers in numbers. D'Estaing, impatient at the delay of operations, attempted to storm the enemy's ramparts. The assault was repulsed with the loss of a thousand of the Franco-Americans. The latter retired in good order. D'Estaing, in the foremost rank on all occasions,

[1] Loménie; *Beaumarchais, sa vie et son temps.*

Digitized by Google

was twice wounded. Among the dead was found the brave Casimir Pulaski, the leader of a small legion which was the first model of the celebrated Polish Legions of the Republic and the Empire (September–October). The French reëmbarked; and their fleet, which had suffered from several gales, separated into three squadrons, one of which returned to Europe with D'Estaing.

The Savannah expedition, despite its want of success, was indirectly productive of an advantageous result. The English, upon the arrival of the French on the coasts of the United States, believing New York menaced, in order to concentrate their forces at this city, had abandoned the position at Rhode Island which it had been vainly attempted to wrest from them the year before. D'Estaing had besides captured from them a fifty-gun ship and two frigates.

The year 1779 terminated, in the American waters, by an encounter very glorious to our arms. December 18, Commodore la Motte-Piquet, with three ships, bravely engaged fourteen British ships in defence of a merchant flotilla, one-half of which he saved; then extricated his three vessels from the midst of the enemy, and returned to the roadstead of Fort Royal.

The year 1779 had been a mournful one for England. She had suspended her internal discords under the influence of a strong national feeling; she had exhausted her resources in gigantic expenditures; she had cast £20,000,000 into the gulf of the war; yet she found herself greatly inferior in forces to the allies. Threatened at home, she had experienced perceptible losses in her distant possessions, which seemed to presage others still more fatal. She seemed gliding down the declivity of ruin. Gloomy tidings arrived even from India, in which the French had no part: an English army had capitulated to the Mahrattas, and Hyder Ali was preparing to take up arms anew. On the continent of America, the Spaniards had just seized the offensive with unforeseen activity and vigor. From Western Louisiana, that French province abandoned to Spain by the treaty of 1763, a body of troops had marched upon Eastern Louisiana, called New Florida by the English, its existing possessors. Invaded in the autumn of 1779, the entire province[1] fell into the hands of the Spanish before the spring of 1781, without the English, obliged to face their enemies at so many points at once, having been able to carry any aid thither.

England had reasons for consolation in the beginning of 1780.

[1] Bâton-Rouge, Mobile, Pensacola, etc.

Digitized by Google

An English mariner of very great talent, but of irregular habits, Admiral Rodney, was detained in France for debts contracted prior to the war. He said one day, in the presence of the Marshal de Biron, that "if he were free, and at the head of the British navy, he would soon destroy the fleets of France and Spain." — "Try, sir," replied the marshal; "you are free!" and paid his debts. Rodney, restored to England by this chivalrous impulse which was to cost us dear, immediately received the command of twenty-two ships of the line designed to succor Gibraltar, which the Spaniards were closely investing, and afterwards to dispute the West Indies with us. He succeeded completely in the first part of his mission, captured a Spanish merchant-man with its escort, overpowered on the coast of Andalusia a weak Spanish squadron taking or destroying six ships of the line, revictualled Gibraltar, and set out triumphantly for the West Indies (January–February, 1780). One of his lieutenants captured a French ship of sixty-four guns which was escorting a convoy. We also lost this year, in the European seas, a sixty-gun ship and several frigates; among others, the celebrated *Belle Poule*, which defended itself five hours with its twenty-six guns against a ship of sixty-four.

These reverses, none of which was without glory, since none of the vessels lost had yielded except to superior forces, were compensated for by very important prizes. Among others, an Irish privateer in the service of France is cited, which captured more than forty trading-vessels in a single cruise. A convoy of sixty-two vessels, the cargoes of which were worth £1,500,000, and which were manned by three thousand sailors, fell into the power of a Franco-Spanish fleet near Cape St. Vincent (August 9). Several frigates and transports were taken from the English. In one of these encounters, our marine lost the brave privateer Royer, who was mortally wounded while forcing a small English squadron, superior to his own, to retreat.

Rodney, during the interval, found himself slow to realize his threats. After defeating the Spaniards in Europe, he was confronted by the French in the West Indies. D'Estaing no longer commanded them. Beloved by the soldiers and sailors, and very popular with the nation at large, this admiral was the object of the hostility of the marine corps, the most jealous and intractable of all bodies, who regarded him as an intruder because he had not come from the marine guards, and because he had first served in the army. Intrigue succeeded in setting him aside this year

Digitized by Google

from the most active and brilliant command, — that of America. He was at least replaced by a sailor worthy to succeed him, the Lieutenant-General Count de Guichen. Rodney and Guichen encountered each other, April 17, in the waters of Dominica. The French had twenty-four ships, the English twenty-one.[1] After admirable manœuvres on both sides, Rodney, who had the weather-gauge, ceased firing, and retired during the night, after having been obliged to quit his disabled flag-ship. He went to St. Lucia to repair his fleet, which had suffered more than the French fleet; and speedily returned to the charge. May 15, a second indecisive action took place between Martinique and St. Lucia. On the 19th, the English vanguard, seven ships strong, found itself engaged with the rearguard and the centre of the French. The wind suddenly falling, the main body of the English fleet was long unable to succor its vanguard, which it finally released, but so much shattered, that, during the night, the mutilated vessels were towed to St. Lucia. A seventy-four-gun ship was sunk. The rest of the fleet retired to Barbadoes. The French admiral paid dearly for his glory: his son, a lieutenant of the navy, was among the victims of this third action.

Rodney, unsuccessful in his attacks on the French fleet, succeeded no better in intercepting a Spanish squadron of twelve ships, which was bringing to the islands a large convoy of troops and merchandise. The admirals De Guichen and Solano effected their junction without difficulty (June 19). Jamaica and the other British islands were in terror; but the want of harmony of the two admirals, the delays and hesitation of the Spaniards, and, above all, a terrible epidemic which raged among their crews and regiments, and which they communicated to the French, paralyzed the combined fleet. These great forces, and this campaign, so well begun, resulted in nothing.[2] Towards autumn, De Guichen, instead of repairing to the United States, where he was expected, returned, according to his instructions, to escort in person to the waters of Cadiz the merchant fleet of the West Indies, which D'Estaing, with the Franco-Spanish squadron of Cadiz, then convoyed to France.[3]

The elements were more terrible enemies than men, this year,

[1] Vessels of fifty guns began no longer to be counted as ships of the line. Each of the two fleets had but one of these vessels.

[2] The Spanish admiral, Solano, was more fortunate in the ensuing spring: it was he who, in May, 1781, seconded by the French of San Domingo, determined the conquest of Pensacola and all Western Florida.

[3] L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. p. 493; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. pp. 420, 475–481; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. III. pp. 275–282, 305–306.

Digitized by Google

to the English West-India colonies. Jamaica had been cruelly ravaged by a hurricane, February 23: it experienced a second one, of extreme violence, at the beginning of October. On the 10th of the same month, a tempest of unheard-of fury, a true convulsion of Nature, laid waste the rich and beautiful Island of Barbadoes from one end to the other; buried several thousand of the inhabitants under the ruins of their dwellings; devastated St. Lucia in the same manner; wrecked numerous vessels, among which were one large ship and two frigates; and disabled many other vessels of war. The French islands also experienced great losses, but much less than those of the English, which were aggravated by the destruction of a part of the merchant fleet of Jamaica, which was at sea during these terrible storms.

During the sterile conflicts in the West Indies, the position of England had improved in the United States. An expedition despatched from New York had taken Charleston, the capital of South Carolina, and invaded the whole of this province (April–May, 1780). General Gates, the conqueror of Burgoyne, was defeated in attempting to recover it (August). The whole South appeared in great danger. The United States were exhausted in turn, and the aid of France had never been so necessary to them. They welcomed, therefore, with as much joy as gratitude, their faithful friend La Fayette, who, seeing no prospect of a descent on England during the year, rejoined Washington, this time with the permission of the cabinet of Versailles, and announced the arrival of a body of French troops, with a convoy of arms and equipments for the Americans. Five thousand French soldiers landed in fact at Rhode Island, July 12, under the command of a distinguished general, Count de Rochambeau, who had been ordered to recognize Washington, invested with the rank of lieutenant-general in the French army, as commander-in-chief. They were escorted only by a small squadron of seven ships of the line, and the English kept the maritime superiority in the United States; but the junction of the French corps with the Americans of Washington and La Fayette at least compelled the enemy to concentrate his principal land and naval forces for the protection of New York and the observation of Rhode Island. The offensive operations of the other English army against the Southern provinces were slackened. The commanding general, Clinton, was unable to send sufficient forces to Lord Cornwallis, the conqueror of Charleston; and the American cause began to improve in the South. America, and La Fayette, its usual interpreter, conjured the

Digitized by Google

French government to complete its work by sending to the United States an adequate naval force. The whole advantage in this coast warfare belonged to the one of the two adversaries that could move his troops more rapidly by sea wherever he pleased.

These entreaties, which could only be granted for the next campaign, were received by new ministers. Sartine had been on bad terms with Necker, as formerly with Turgot, but for very different reasons. If he had the merit of actively urging forward the building of vessels for the navy,[1] by way of compensation, not only did he understand nothing of war, but his administration was a prey to disorder. He had exceeded by seventeen millions, in 1780, the prodigious appropriation made to the marine (one hundred and twenty-six millions); notwithstanding which, the sailors were not paid, and the different branches of the service were continually delayed, as had been only too well experienced on the most important occasions. Necker, strong in the support of public opinion, and the eulogies which he received even in the English parliament, where the Opposition made use of his name to flagellate the ministers of George III., — Necker declared that it was necessary to choose between his resignation and the removal of Sartine. Maurepas, who had become very jealous of the director of finance, would have gladly sacrificed him, but dared not. Sartine was dismissed. Maurepas proposed to Necker to place both the marine and the finances in his hands, *after the example of Colbert*. He hoped to crush him beneath the weight of this double ministry. Necker escaped the snare, and baffled Maurepas in his turn. In accordance with the Queen, he took advantage of a fit of the gout, which kept the aged minister for some days in bed, to procure the appointment of a protégé of Marie-Antoinette, the Marquis de Castries (October 14, 1780). This time, the Queen's confidence was honorably placed. M. de Castries was too little acquainted with the marine; but at least he was a man of judgment and courage, and was greatly esteemed for his conduct in the Seven-Years' War.

Two months after, the minister of war disappeared in turn. The incapable courtier who had succeeded Saint-Germain, the Prince de Montbarrei, was replaced by the Marquis de Ségur (December, 1780), — another protégé of the Queen, and a new repulse for Maurepas. Ségur, a brave officer and an intelligent

[1] Fifteen ships of the line had been launched within two years, and the campaign of 1780 had been opened with seventy-nine ships. The English boasted of having one hundred and two. — L. Guérin, t. II. p. 489; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 355.

Digitized by Google

administrator, possessed the qualities necessary to aid Castries in vigorously pushing operations: he was even more especially adapted to the department of war than was Castries to that of the marine.

France, therefore, was strengthening her means of action, and putting herself in a position to make a better use of them. England had relapsed into discord. The Opposition had begun to clamor anew after the reverses of 1779, and had introduced into the House of Commons formidable numbers of petitions against the influence of the crown and the parliamentary corruption. The language of the orators and the petitioners was so threatening, that the refusal of the taxes and civil war seemed imminent. The House of Commons was terrified. The Opposition gained the majority for a moment: it lost it again, however; and the minister North maintained his position (April, 1780). Violent disturbances broke out, meanwhile, from another cause. Before the commercial concessions to Ireland, important concessions had been granted to the Catholics in 1778. The ineligibility to inherit property,[1] and to acquire real estate, imposed on them, had been removed; and the penalty of perpetual imprisonment decreed against their priests and monks had been abrogated, on condition of swearing fidelity to the reigning house, and abjuring the belief in the power of the Pope in temporal matters. The hatred and terror of Papistry subsisted in all their bitterness among the Scotch Presbyterians. These violent people raised an outcry of treason, and replied to the act of parliament by riots, and by sacking the houses of the Catholics at Edinburgh and Glasgow. Two great associations were formed in Scotland, then in England, *to oppose the re-establishment of Papistry;* both of which chose for their president Lord George Gordon, a personage of an enthusiasm carried to madness. June 2, 1780, an immense crowd, by the invitation of Lord George Gordon, repaired to Westminster for the purpose of enforcing on the parliament the revocation of the concessions made to the Catholics. Many of the members of both houses were insulted and maltreated on their way to Westminster. The houses, nevertheless, refused to deliberate under the pressure of the mob; and the multitude hesitated to violate the sanctuary of the legislature. It was not appeased, however; and, for several days, the disorders continued to increase. The mob sacked and burned, first the chapels of the Catholics which had been tol-

1 By an act of the reign of William III., a Catholic heir was set aside when the next of kin after him was of the *Established Church*.

Digitized by Google

erated, then their houses, then the houses of several high functionaries and members of the parliament who had proposed or supported the measures of tolerance: the prisons were forced; and the skies of the great city glowed nightly with the flames of conflagrations. The brutal passions of the nameless populace that filled the old quarters of London were excited to the highest pitch, and men began to destroy for the sake of destruction or of pillage. The Bank was seriously threatened. The government at last determined to summon troops to London. The sedition did not hold out against the musketry, and was stifled in the blood of several hundred of the rioters. The leaders of the Opposition, Fox, Burke, and even the demagogue Wilkes, had energetically declared themselves opposed to the riot, and in favor of tolerance. This storm, by terrifying the middle classes, effected a diversion from the legal dissensions of the parliament, and strengthened the ministry for some time. It again obtained the majority in a new parliament, and was able, despite the fatigue and suffering of England, to dispose of sums for 1781 greatly exceeding those which any English administration had ever had in its hands. The budget of war amounted to £25,000,000.[1]

The war had been less disadvantageous to the English in 1780 than in the preceding year; but every thing announced that unheard-of efforts would be required to avoid being overpowered in the next campaign. Their diplomacy had not been happy. Their selfish pride, and their contempt for the rights of others, were punished by absolute isolation; while France found everywhere either allies or a friendly neutrality. As early as July 26, 1778, almost at the opening of hostilities, the French government had issued a maritime regulation in favor of the rights of neutrals, by which our ship-owners were forbidden to stop neutral vessels, even when coming from the enemy's ports or on their way thither, except those which were carrying assistance to places blockaded or besieged, or were laden with articles contraband of war. The latter merchandise was to be confiscated; but the ship stopped was to experience the same fate only if the contraband articles formed three-fourths of her lading, or if she had on board either a supercargo, clerk, or other officer of the enemy, or a crew, more than one-third of which was formed of the enemy's subjects. The neutrals were dissatisfied with the last restrictions; but the harsh measures of England soon made them forget this light grievance. The English, treading

[1] *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 521.

Digitized by Google

under foot the principle laid down in their treaties with Holland as in the treaties of Utrecht, to wit, that the flag covers the merchandise, except what is contraband of war, treated as contraband every kind of merchandise which could be of service to the marine, and stopped on the ocean all neutral vessels freighted for France as trafficking with blockaded places, *since all the French ports were naturally blockaded by the ports of England.*

The irritation against them became general. Denmark complained, and obtained only a very inadequate reparation. The King of Sweden did more than complain: he armed himself, and enforced his demands by this energetic demonstration (April, 1779). Holland complained like Denmark, and armed herself like Sweden; but her words and acts only procured her new affronts. England relied on the criminal connivance of the executive power, — that degenerate Nassau who sold his country in exchange for the support given him by the cabinet of St. James against the friends of liberty. Not only did she refuse to respect the neutrality of Holland, but she imperiously summoned the United Provinces to renounce this neutrality, and to furnish her the assistance stipulated by the ancient treaties of alliance (July-November, 1779). France not less peremptorily claimed the full observance of the neutrality from which the United Provinces had derogated by admitting the English principle which entitled contraband of war the naval munitions destined for France. The restrictive measures adopted by way of reprisal against Dutch commerce by the French government proved effective: the city of Amsterdam, then the greater part of the cities of Holland, then part of those of the other United Provinces, successively declared themselves in favor of full neutrality and of the true principles of maritime law. The republican party, revived and supported with as much ability as energy by the French ambassador, La Vauguyon, who bore little resemblance to his father, the baleful governor of Louis XVI., caused the merchant-men to be convoyed by armed escorts, despite the faction of the stadtholder.[1] December 31, 1779, a convoy escorted by Dutch ships of war was stopped in the Channel by an English squadron. The Dutch commodore fired on the aggressors, to prove their violence and his resistance; then, too inferior to be able to give battle, struck

[1] Flassan remarks, as a rare event in diplomatic history, that "La Vauguyon did not give the most trifling sum of money to gain over or corrupt any one, and won the ascendency for the French party by means of persuasion alone." — Flassan, t. VII. p. 289.

Digitized by Google

his flag, and followed to Spithead his trading-vessels, carried off by the English. The merchant-men were declared a lawful prize by the English admiralty. England, no longer hoping for the alliance of Holland, preferred her enmity to her neutrality. This wealthy and feeble adversary offered to British cupidity flourishing colonies to pillage, and an enormous amount of interest to repudiate.[1]

In default of Holland, the cabinet of St. James hoped, at this moment, at length to gain a powerful ally, — Russia, — who carried on scarcely any commerce with France, but a very extensive one with England; and who seemed, moreover, disposed to sacrifice every thing to the interests of her ambition in the East. Catharine II. had insinuated to the English government, that, if it would consent to unite with her against the Ottoman empire, she would accept the English alliance under the form of an armed mediation of Russia in the war between England and her colonies, France, and Spain. Catharine was divided between two influences, — that of the favorite Potemkin, who inclined towards England; and that of the prime minister Panin, attached to the great Frederick, and ill disposed towards the English. When the English cabinet officially addressed to the Czarina the proposals which she herself had instigated, Panin found means of protracting the affair. During the interval, the Spaniards having seized two Russian vessels in the Mediterranean which were trafficking with the English, Catharine demanded satisfaction from Spain, and armed fifteen ships of the line to support her demand. The English believed every thing won; when Panin, with marvellous ability, persuaded the Czarina to seize the opportunity to establish the system of true maritime rights in Europe, and to place herself with éclat at the head of the neutral powers. Catharine cared very little for *rights;* but she willingly lent herself to every opportunity of making a display. She permitted Panin to send to the belligerent powers and to the courts of Sweden and Dénmark a declaration, in which Russia laid down the principles, first, that neutral vessels have a right to sail from port to port, and along the coasts of nations at war; secondly, that property belonging to the subjects of belligerent powers should be respected on neutral vessels; thirdly, that no articles are contraband except arms, equipments, and munitions of war; fourthly, that no ports are blockaded except those before which a naval

[1] The Dutch had, as we have already said, an immense amount of capital invested in England.

Digitized by Google

force of the enemy is permanently stationed in close proximity (March, 1780).

These principles were the only ones which could be admitted by the rights of nations; and it is one of the singularities of history that they should have been so noisily proclaimed by one of the governments the least mindful of right which has ever appeared upon earth.

The maxims of the English admiralty were radically denied by the declaration of Russia, which the French government hastened to accept, as being only the expression of its own principles (April 25, 1780). Spain did the same. Sweden and Denmark entered into an engagement to support by arms the principles laid down by Russia; and the three Northern powers engaged, in case of need, to form a combined fleet of thirty-five ships for this purpose, and to close the Baltic to the ships of war of belligerent States.[1] Holland should have hastened to accede to the armed neutrality of the North; but the stadtholder still had the power to protract this assent, despite new outrages;[2] and England was the first to declare war against Holland by a manifesto of December 20, 1780. Meanwhile, the Dutch ambassadors signed the armed neutrality at St. Petersburg (January 5, 1781); but Russia, as had been hoped at London, replied that it was too late, and was no longer willing to protect the flag of the United Provinces. Catharine II., who really cared for but one thing, her designs on Turkey, and who had yielded to the impulse of another on the maritime question, did not exhibit a well-sustained energy in this affair, and, in the end, herself entitled *armed neutrality armed nudity*.[3]

The Dutch possessions in America had been immediately attacked. In the beginning of February, 1781, Admiral Rodney, after a fruitless attempt to recapture from the French the Island of St. Vincent, proceeded to the Dutch West-India islands, which

[1] Even Portugal made an attempt to escape from English tyranny. The English privateers had converted her harbors into markets, whither they went to sell their prizes taken from neutrals as well as from enemies. The Portuguese government closed the port of Lisbon to the ships of war which came thither with prizes. England clamored so loudly, that the King of Portugal annulled his regulation. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. II. p. 495.

[2] The English forcibly carried American vessels into the Dutch port of the Island of St. Martin, in the West Indies (August, 1780).

[3] Flassan, t. VII. liv. vii. liv. viii.; Garden, t. IV. pp. 316–319. Prussia had acceded, May 8, 1781; Austria, October 9, 1781. Portugal itself, shaking off the English yoke, acceded July 13, 1782. — See Garden, t. V. pp. 1–49, concerning the whole affair.

Digitized by Google

were defenceless. The small but wealthy Island of St. Eustatius, and its adjuncts, St. Martin and Saba, fell into the power of the English, with a very great number of merchant-men, both Dutch and foreign, attracted to St. Eustatius by the freedom of the port. Rodney used his easy victory, not like the general of a regular force, but like a leader of buccaneers. All the personal property, private as well as public, was confiscated; and all the merchandise was put up at auction for the benefit of the leaders of the army. A large amount of the merchandise belonged to English traders; but no notice was taken of this. The Americans purchased supplies through third parties, to be used against England: Rodney closed his eyes to it. The immense loss experienced by the Dutch (seventy-five millions, it is affirmed) was thus unprofitable to Great Britain. Rodney himself lost a large part of his enormous booty: most of the ships in which he had embarked the fruit of his piracies were captured by a French cruiser.

Two of the flourishing settlements of Dutch Guiana, Demarara and Essequibo, were invaded in turn, but were treated in a manner more in conformity with the usages of civilized nations.

The first blows dealt seemed to justify the audacity of England in giving herself another enemy; but the formidable preparations of France and Spain soon disturbed the joy of this success, devoid of peril or of glory.

The campaign of 1781 opened in our waters by a surprise attempted by an intrepid adventurer, the Baron de Rullecourt, on the Island of Jersey, with a free corps of a thousand men. This handful of volunteers, setting out from the little isles of Chaussey in simple barks, landed by night on the perilous coast of Jersey, where some of their transports were wrecked with the loss of two hundred men. They, nevertheless, scaled the heights; surprised St. Hélier, the capital of the island; seized the governor and magistrates, and forced them to sign a capitulation. The success of this incredible temerity seemed assured; when the English garrison of the citadel refused to recognize the capitulation, and drove back the French with its artillery. The people, recovering from their stupor, rushed to arms, and were reënforced from the rest of the island. Rullecourt was killed at the head of his little troop. The greater part of his companions were taken: the rest succeeded in reaching the boats, and regaining the coast of France (January 6, 1781).

This episode could exert no influence upon the great expedi-

Digitized by Google

tions. It was very evident that Sartine was no longer in the ministry. The plan of the campaign had been perfectly laid, and the resources were ready in time. As early as the month of March, a first fleet quitted Brest for the West Indies. We shall speedily recur to the events to which it lent a decisive coöperation. About the end of June, a second squadron of eighteen ships of the line, commanded by De Guichen, set sail from Brest for Cadiz to rally the Spanish fleet of Cordova, which had not succeeded in preventing the English from revictualling Gibraltar, reduced to the last extremity in April, without striking a blow. July 21, the combined fleet, fifty ships of the line strong, quitted the roadstead of Cadiz simultaneously with a large convoy carrying ten thousand Spanish troops, commanded by a French general, the Duke de Crillon, under the escort of two ships of the line and some other vessels. The convoy crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and, thwarted for some time by the winds, at length landed the troops, August 21, upon the shore of Minorca. The English governor, who had only three thousand men at his disposal, did not even attempt to defend either the city and harbor of Mahon, or the other places of the island, but permitted a hundred and sixty cannon, and a great number of vessels and rich magazines, to fall into the hands of the assailants without striking a blow; and hastened to shut himself up in Fort St. Philip, which he obstinately defended against the Spanish army, reënforced successively from Barcelona and Toulon.

Meanwhile, the great fleet, after protecting the entrance of the convoy into the Mediterranean, had returned to the Channel. This time, the Spaniard, Cordova, had the chief command. The English admiral, Darby, who was cruising with twenty-one ships, narrowly escaped falling among this formidable armament, and barely had time to take refuge in the roadstead of Torbay. The French admiral, Guichen, and the major-general of the Spanish fleet, Massaredo, eagerly urged Cordova to consent to an attack. The narrows which led into the roadstead presented some peril; but the anchorage of Torbay was protected by no fortifications on the land side. The old admiral, worn out by age, refused; and the council of war, in which the Spaniards were in the majority, decided in the same manner.[1] Soon after, disease and bad weather compelled the combined fleet to dissolve. The French set sail for Brest as early as September 11; and the

[1] Unpublished Memoirs of Admiral Willaumez, cited by Captain Bouet-Willaumez of the navy, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, April 1, 1852.

Digitized by Google

Spaniards returned to Cadiz. This was the complete renunciation of those heterogeneous unions which combined great masses of men to no purpose.

The kind of fatality which rested upon our fleet of the Channel had just rendered its great superiority for the third time useless. The news from America indemnified France. This year, the fate of the war was at length decided in the United States.

As early as March 24, a fleet of twenty-one ships of the line set out from Brest for Martinique, escorting a large convoy; so well equipped, that it was enabled to make the voyage in thirty-six days. Public opinion would have gladly replaced D'Estaing at the head of this fine armament; but the command was given to Lieutenant-General de Grasse. He was a brave and devoted officer: events would show whether his talents corresponded to so great a task. There was no reason immediately to repent of the choice. Fortune favored our arms. Admiral Hood vainly attempted, with eighteen ships, to close the bay of Fort Royal to De Grasse, who brought his convoy into the bay, and reënforced himself with four ships formerly blockaded in this roadstead (April 28–29). Admiral Hood, after a battle valiantly sustained with inferior forces, escaped, owing to the skilfulness of his manœuvring, and retired to the Island of Antigua, where Rodney, his commander-in-chief, rejoined him with three ships from St. Eustatius. The French fleet, letting Hood go, returned to make a feigned attack on St. Lucia (May 9–13). Meanwhile, a small squadron landed a body of French troops on Tobago, the southernmost of the Windward Islands. A few days after, the whole fleet moved in the same direction with new land forces. The English garrison of Tobago capitulated June 2. Rodney had been unable to give it any aid.

In the beginning of July, Admiral de Grasse set sail from Martinique for French Cape in San Domingo; took there three thousand land forces and some money; successfully crossed the double channel of Bahama, which fleets rarely enter; and anchored, August 30, at the entrance of the Chesapeake, — that immense bay, which stretches for eighty leagues into the heart of the United States.

He was expected there with impatience. The military operations had been very active on the American continent since the beginning of the year. The English, reënforced from Europe, had transported a body of troops from New York by sea to the James River in Virginia. This attack, directed against the very heart

Digitized by Google

of America, was of much greater importance than the invasion of Georgia or South Carolina. The possession of Virginia became the great object of the war. La Fayette had the honor of being commissioned to defend Virginia. The American general Greene resumed the offensive in the interior, in the direction of the Carolinas. The English general of the South, Lord Cornwallis, leaving his subaltern generals to dispute the ground with Greene, crossed North Carolina, and rejoined the detachment from New York in Virginia with the main body of his troops. He left a reserve corps with a flotilla at Portsmouth, at the lower part of the James River, and moved forward at the head of five thousand choice troops. La Fayette, who had only three thousand, the greater part militia, found himself in great peril (May, 1781). While, in old Europe, hundreds of thousands of soldiers had recently been seen slaughtering each other, without succeeding in changing the boundaries of a province, these handfuls of men in America were deciding the destinies of an infant world!

La Fayette, with a prudence and ability very remarkable in a general of twenty-four, fell back step by step, without suffering himself to be weakened, to the northern extremity of Virginia, in order to preserve his communications with Pennsylvania. Reënforced by the Pennsylvanians, he ceased to recede; saved the military magazines of the Southern States by a rapid march; and, become almost equal to the enemy in numbers, had the art to cause himself to be believed greatly superior in forces. Cornwallis, in turn, fell back towards the James River, and did not stop until he had rejoined his reserve corps at the lower part and the south of this large stream. La Fayette was not in a condition to attack him. Cornwallis, reassured, moved back to the north of the James River, and took horse on the York River, near the outlet of this stream into Chesapeake Bay. La Fayette posted himself on the York River, above the enemy, cut off the communications of Cornwallis with the Carolinas, and threatened Portsmouth, where the English reserve had remained. This reserve abandoned Portsmouth, and joined Cornwallis at Yorktown (July–August). Had La Fayette himself directed the enemy's army, he would not have operated differently. The positions of Yorktown and Gloucester, excellent for an army that was the master of the sea, became a veritable snare to the party that ceased to possess the maritime superiority. August 30, as we have said, the French fleet arrived to close Chesapeake Bay, blockade the

Digitized by Google

James and York Rivers, and land three thousand French, who joined La Fayette.[1]

September 5, an English fleet was signalled: it was the squadron from New York under Admiral Graves, reënforced by a part of the West-India fleet under the command of Hood. De Grasse, without waiting for a large number of his sailors who were engaged in landing the troops, went to meet the English with twenty-four ships of the line against twenty. Admiral Graves, perceiving the force of the French, took advantage of the wind to avoid a general action; but his vanguard, commanded by Hood, was greatly injured by the French vanguard, which was led by the illustrious navigator Bougainville, and which bore the brunt of the battle. Night permitted Graves to rally and to repair his position. He did not attempt to renew the battle, but put out to sea; while De Grasse returned to his blockade, capturing on his way two English frigates which were attempting to effect an entrance into York River. De Grasse found off Cape Henry, at the entrance of Chesapeake Bay, the French squadron from Rhode Island, which the Count de Barras,[2] although his senior, came spontaneously to place under his command, with an abnegation too rare among military leaders. De Grasse thus had thirty-eight ships of the line under his flag,—a force which forbade the enemy all hope of maritime assistance.

The commander of the squadron, Barras, had brought siege artillery and munitions. De Grasse, who declared himself obliged to set out again for the West Indies, urged La Fayette to attack the enemy at once. The youthful general had the wisdom to refuse, and the virtue to prefer to his own glory the interest of the cause and the lives of his soldiers. He was little superior in numbers to a well-intrenched enemy; and he knew that Washington and Rochambeau, after feigning to menace New York in order to prevent Clinton from sending reënforcements to Virginia, were on their way to him by forced marches, and that they had already reached the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. De Grasse consented to prolong his stay; sent his transports to convey thither the six thousand soldiers brought by the American commander-in-chief; and, September 28, eight thousand Americans and as many French

[1] The French government had accompanied this military aid with important pecuniary assistance. Besides its direct loans to the Americans, it had been security for, then had taken upon itself, another loan of ten millions which they had endeavored to obtain in Holland.

[2] The uncle of the member of the convention.

Digitized by Google

invested the two corps of the little British army in Yorktown and Gloucester, on both banks of the broad York River. The siege works were commenced before Yorktown during the night of October 6–7. On the night of the 14th, two columns, one of American light infantry led by La Fayette, the other of French grenadiers and chasseurs[1] under the command of Major-General Viomesnil, carried with the bayonet two redoubts which covered the left of the enemy's lines. On the 19th, Lord Cornwallis capitulated with respect to Yorktown, Gloucester, and the flotilla, and surrendered himself prisoner of war with seven thousand soldiers and one thousand sailors. Two hundred and fourteen guns and thirty vessels fell into the power of the conquerors. A fifty-gun ship and several other vessels had been burned. The English fleet, increased by reënforcements to twenty-seven ships, reappeared, October 27, off Cape Henry, only to receive intelligence of this disaster, and was too happy itself to escape De Grasse.

A prolonged cry of rejoicing resounded throughout America. Next to God, a whole people saluted France as the author of its deliverance. The independence of the United States was thenceforth assured. "Humanity," wrote La Fayette, "has gained its suit: liberty will nevermore be without an asylum."[2] Glorious days when France, rejuvenated and purified by the ascendency of public opinion alone, forced the traditional power which still governed her to employ its sword in the service of justice and reason, — days of spotless glory, which should not be effaced from our memory by the gigantic triumphs of a later age, mingled with fatal errors, and followed by such cruel reverses.

Washington and La Fayette would have gladly completed the victory by retaining Admiral de Grasse to aid them in expelling the English from South Carolina and Georgia. De Grasse believed himself unable to prolong his coöperation, and returned to the West Indies. The fall of the English posts in the South was, however, only a question of time. General Greene had already driven back the enemy from all South Carolina into Charleston, and the progress of the Spaniards in Florida rendered the position of the English completely untenable. The Spaniards, masters of Western Florida, had effected a new landing in Eastern Florida,

[1] They had been taken from that celebrated Auvergne regiment of which Rochambeau had long been colonel, and in the ranks of which D'Assas had met his death. "My children," exclaimed Rochambeau to them at the moment of giving the signal, "do not forget *spotless Auvergne!*" They remembered it. — *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 294.

[2] *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 50.

Digitized by Google

and captured St. Augustine, the capital of this great peninsula (August, 1781). The English garrisons of Savannah and Charleston were about to be shut in between the Spaniards and the Americans, and New York itself could not long be sustained.[1]

The capture of part of a convoy of troops and munitions, despatched from Brest to the East and West Indies, was a trifling consolation to the English for the disasters in America (December 12).

France coöperated energetically everywhere with her allies. Holland was in great need of her assistance. The unworthy stadtholder had left the arsenals everywhere empty, and the colonies defenceless; and the republican party, again become preponderant, but not absolute master of the government, was forced to use great efforts to constrain the executive power to restore to the United Provinces a naval force worthy of any respect. The Dutch sailors proved, at the battle of Dogger's-bank, that the blood of De Ruyter and Van Tromp was not frozen in their veins;[2] but their country was none the less obliged to solicit from the French a vengeance which she could not obtain for herself. The Governor of Martinique, the brave and able Marquis de Bouillé, surprised the Island of St. Eustatius in conditions which called to mind the unhappy attack on the Island of Jersey. He succeeded better than Rullecourt; and four hundred French, separated from their ships, which had put out to sea, and from their companions, who could not assist them, forced eight hundred English to lay down their arms. St. Eustatius and the neighboring islands were restored to Holland, with the remains of the booty of Rodney (November 26). A small French squadron, a few weeks after, expelled the English from Dutch Guiana.

The French almost immediately undertook another conquest on their own account. Admiral de Grasse, who had returned from the Chesapeake to the West Indies, after attempts on Barbadoes which were defeated by contrary winds, landed Bouillé with six thousand men on the Island of St. Christopher, the common cradle of French and English colonization in the West Indies, and which had been left in the possession of the English by the treaty

[1] Concerning this campaign, see *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. I. pp. 266–284, 409–480; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. III. pp. 359–400; *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. pp. 126–152; L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. pp. 499–510; *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. pp. 262–299; *Vie et correspondance de Washington*.

[2] August 5, 1781, two small English and Dutch squadrons fought in the North Sea the most infuriated battle as yet witnessed in this war, disabling and destroying each other without any decided advantage.

Digitized by Google

of 1763 (January 11, 1782). The feeble English garrison abandoned the town of Basse-Terre, the capital of the island, and the coast batteries, and took refuge on the fortified height of Brimstone Hill, where the French besieged them. The English fleet of Admiral Hood hastened from Barbadoes to the assistance of St. Christopher. It had only twenty-two ships against thirty. De Grasse determined to profit by his superiority to overpower the enemy. He quitted the roadstead in which he was advantageously posted, and went to meet the English. Hood retreated; drew the French admiral out to sea; then, by a manœuvre of great skill, flanked the French fleet, and posted himself in the same roadstead which De Grasse had just quitted. De Grasse, furious, strove to repair his unskilfulness by temerity: he twice attacked Hood in the excellent position of which the latter had despoiled him. He was twice repulsed; and the English fleet landed a body of troops, which attempted to succor Brimstone Hill (January 25–26). Fortunately, the general of the land forces knew how to repair the error of the admiral. A small detachment from Bouillé's corps defeated the English, and forced them to reëmbark; and this general, entirely separated as he was from the fleet, vigorously continued the siege, and forced the garrison to capitulate before the eyes of Admiral Hood (February 13). The capitulation comprised the Island of Nevis.

Hood, shut in between the French fleet and the batteries which Bouillé caused to be erected on the heights that commanded the roadstead, would have been lost had he had to deal with another adversary than De Grasse. The latter committed the incredible folly of quitting his anchorage to go in person to the Island of Nevis in search of provisions, instead of sending his frigates thither. Hood, during the night, cut his cables, and escaped. The next morning, he was out of sight!

It was terrible to see our best fleet at the discretion of a man capable of such madness, and who would listen to no counsel. There was reason to fear that Fortune would finally grow weary of aiding us. She still favored us, however; and the Island of Montserrat surrendered after St. Christopher (February 22). Nothing remained in the possession of the English, of all the West Indies, but Jamaica, Antigua, Barbadoes, and St. Lucia.

The fall of Fort St. Philip, that powerful citadel of Port Mahon which the English had been unable to revictual, and which its courageous garrison were forced by exhaustion to surrender, February 5, 1782, may be considered, with the capture of St.

Digitized by Google

Christopher, as the complement of this admirable campaign of 1781. Provence and Languedoc witnessed with the most lively joy the fall of that nest of vultures, from which the British privateers darted unceasingly on every vessel that quitted our southern ports, and made it their prey. The loss of such a post was more to England than the loss of a battle: it was losing one of the most glorious fruits of the treaty of Utrecht.

Important events, to which we shall have occasion to revert, transpired about the same time in the East Indies, where the French flag had reappeared with glory. Everywhere abroad, the presages were favorable. Unhappily, this was no longer the case at home. While the nation showed its courage and power completely revived, its feeble monarch, incapable of sustaining and profiting by such a change of fortune, had just repeated the irreparable weakness of 1776, and had sacrificed Necker as he had sacrificed Turgot, and to the same enemies (May 19, 1781). In order not to interrupt the narrative of the American War, we will postpone the exposition of the principal administrative acts of Necker, as well as of the circumstances which caused his fall, and the substitution for him of a lawyer devoid of financial consistency, Joli de Fleuri. We will only remark, that, though his fall had a great effect on public opinion in France and everywhere, it was productive of no immediate material results: the funds had been fully secured for 1781, and even in part for 1782, by the minister who had found it possible to borrow five hundred millions in four years on relatively moderate conditions. His successor completed the resources of 1782 by the old expedients of routine ministers, the reëstablishment of abolished offices, the increase of taxes and duties, etc.

France had lost the minister, who, after opposing the war, had succeeded in finding the means of conducting it. England, a few months later, expelled the minister who had desired the war, and had carried it on badly. Ireland, suspecting the intention of withdrawing the concessions which she had obtained, resumed the most menacing attitude, without distinction between Protestants and Catholics, and began to refuse all supremacy to the parliament of Great Britain over the Irish parliament. The Irish agitation, but, above all, the fall of Minorca and St. Christopher, determined the fall of Lord North, already greatly shaken by the disaster at Yorktown. The House of Commons passed a resolution which implied the renunciation of the attempt to reconquer the *revolted provinces*, and the concentration of the efforts of

Digitized by Google

England against her European enemies. Great Britain resigned herself to that dismemberment of the British empire, the thought of which had killed Lord Chatham. Lord North offered his resignation after twelve years of the most unfortunate ministry that England had long experienced (March, 1782). The parliament had voted for the war more than £100,000,000 from 1775 to 1782.[1] At the close of 1781, England had lost eighty-two ships of war; her enemies, altogether, ninety-four. She had ninety ships of the line; the Franco-Spaniards, one hundred and thirty-six, without counting the Dutch. The parliament had just voted one hundred thousand sailors for 1782.

The new ministry, in which figured all the important names of the Opposition, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Lord Shelburne, the brothers Howe, Admiral Keppel, Lord Richmond, etc., all, except that young inheritor of the name of Pitt, who was so soon and so long to govern England, — the new ministry, faithful to its origin, pacified Ireland by recognizing the independence of the Irish parliament; a brilliant concession, which the younger Pitt would one day cause to be revoked amidst seas of blood. It attempted at the same time to treat with the United States and Holland, in order to be forced to confront only the ancient enemies of England, — France and Spain, the House of Bourbon. It offered to recognize the independence of the American colonies, and to send no more reënforcements to the English garrisons of the United States. The war languished upon the American continent, where the discouraged English shut themselves up in the few places which they retained; and the Americans, exhausted with so many efforts, seemed waiting for the last positions of the enemy to fall of themselves.

This was not the case in the West Indies, where great naval forces confronted each other. Admiral Hood, who had so adroitly escaped De Grasse, had been rejoined by a squadron brought from Europe by Rodney; and the latter, on taking the chief command, had thirty-eight ships of the line under his flag. The French, joined to the Spaniards, were still greatly superior; and their plan was to attack Jamaica with fifty ships, and the

[1] Two million pounds in 1775, five million in 1776, five million in 1777, ten million in 1778, twelve million in 1779, twelve million in 1780, twelve million in 1781, in addition to the loans. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. pp. 195, 309. In the concluding discussions, a statesman, Lord Mulgrave, let fall an assertion which caused great scandal; namely, that England had never been superior to France on the sea, when France had applied all her resources to the marine. — See Adolphus, *Reign of George III.*, book xlii.

Digitized by Google

numerous land forces assembled at Martinique, San Domingo, and Cuba.

It was necessary first of all to effect a junction between the French and the Spanish fleets on the coast of San Domingo. Until then, it had been as much to the interest of the French to avoid battle as to the English to give it. De Grasse set sail from Fort Royal in Martinique, April 8, with thirty-one ships of the line, two of fifty guns, and a convoy of one hundred and fifty sail. Bougainville and Vaudreuil commanded under him. He steered towards the channel which separates Dominica from Guadeloupe, in order to debouch to the windward of these islands. Rodney, who was observing him from St. Lucia, started in his pursuit. The French gained upon him, favored by a breeze by which the English vanguard alone could likewise profit. De Grasse could not resist the temptation to attack this vanguard, and take his revenge on Hood. Hood's division, indeed, was badly injured, without being overpowered; and, when the English centre came up to its assistance, De Grasse determined to avoid a general engagement, in which he succeeded (April 9). Rodney employed the night in rallying his forces and recovering from the shock. De Grasse sent on his convoy, under the escort of two fifty-gun ships, and pursued his course, leaving at Guadeloupe two other ships, separated from him, or obliged to put in by accidents of the sea. April 11, he was almost out of sight of the enemy. During the night of April 10–12, a seventy-four-gun ship, injured by awkwardly running foul, fell behind, and could no longer follow. The commonest prudence prescribed the sacrifice of this vessel. De Grasse, without taking counsel of any one, tacked about, returned to disengage the lagging ship, and sent her to Guadeloupe. This insane movement rendered battle with twenty-eight ships against thirty-eight inevitable.

April 12, at seven in the morning, the firing was opened along the whole line. The French displayed a steadfast courage, and maintained the conflict without marked disadvantage till about noon. Rodney at length succeeded, by the superiority of his manœuvring, in breaking their line and gaining the wind. From that time the disorder was irretrievable. Each French ship could do nothing but to make a desperate defence in the position where it had been thrown by the chances of battle and the sea. Several ships of Bougainville's squadron, moreover, which had fallen to the leeward, found it almost impossible to share the last efforts of their companions in arms. Numbers prevailed. The skilful

Digitized by Google

major-general of the French fleets, Du Pavillon, and the intrepid La Clochetterie, who had gloriously opened this war by the engagement of the *Belle Poule*, were struck dead, with many other choice men. Three ships of seventy-four and one of sixty-four guns were taken, after having lost almost all their officers and the greater part of their crews. Bougainville saved a fifth ship, ready to succumb; but no one, despite generous efforts, could succeed in effectively succoring De Grasse, who, in the magnificent ship of one hundred and ten guns, the *Ville de Paris*,[1] fought furiously until night against four English ships, which overpowered him with their combined fire. Finally, at six in the evening, a fifth adversary came up to finish the French admiral,—Admiral Hood. The imprudent and unfortunate De Grasse at length struck his flag. He had fought nearly twelve hours, and had on the deck of his vessel only three men not wounded, of whom he had the misfortune to be one. He had shown himself, in this fatal campaign, the bravest of soldiers, and the most incapable of leaders.

Night put an end to the battle. While the enemy, who had suffered greatly, was forming again in line, and repairing his injuries, the main body of the French fleet gained the open sea, and reached San Domingo; but the two sixty-four-gun ships, which had put in at Guadeloupe, having sailed again without hearing of the engagement, fell among Hood's squadron, and swelled the success of the English.

This victory was very consoling to British self-love, and the only naval action in this war, the results of which had been wholly decisive. It was, however, only a defensive victory. Jamaica was saved; but, far from the French or the Spanish West Indies falling a prey to the conquerors, the English did not even consider themselves able to undertake to recapture their islands conquered by the French. The trophies of their triumph escaped them. One of the ships taken, the *César*, blew up, the night after the battle, with its crew and the English who held her. The French flag-ship, the *Ville de Paris*, and another vessel sent from the West Indies to England, were sunk in a tempest with two English ships which accompanied them. A fourth of our ships which had been captured by the English was sunk by two French frigates; a fifth shortly after foundered at sea. Little remained to the victors of their trophies except the captive admiral, whom

[1] This was the ship presented to Louis XV., in 1762, by the municipal corporation of Paris.

Digitized by Google

they sent to London. The British people gave a veritable ovation to the vanquished mariner, whose valor they extolled with proud generosity in order at the same time to extol their own glory. De Grasse did not sufficiently comprehend the true meaning of the acclamations which were lavished upon him, and lent himself to them with puerile vanity, ill sustaining the dignity of misfortune. Public opinion in France became so much the more severe to him.[1]

The national feeling had borne these reverses with firmness. The repetition was witnessed of the great uprising which had been manifested among us after the last maritime disasters of the Seven-Years' War. Large subscriptions were opened in corporations and among private individuals for the purpose of repairing the losses of our navy. The municipal corps of Paris set the example by offering a ship of the line to the King. It is affirmed that the subscriptions amounted to a sum sufficient for the construction of fourteen ships.[2] The attitude of the French navy in America corresponded to the energetic manifestations of the nation. Far from being disheartened, it made several offensive expeditions. Captain la Peyrouse, afterwards so celebrated for his great voyage and his tragical and mysterious end, detached with a small squadron, destroyed the English settlements on Hudson's Bay, the entrepôt of the peltry trade.[3] Another detachment took possession of Turk Islands; islets full of rich salt-works at the south-eastern extremity of the Archipelago of the Bahamas. The Spaniards, on their side, took the Bahama Islands.

Our allies faithfully kept their engagements. The proposals of the new English ministry, which reached the United States simultaneously with the news of the defeat of Admiral de Grasse, were unhesitatingly rejected by Congress; and all the assemblies of the Thirteen States declared any one an enemy of his country who should propose to negotiate without the coöperation of France.[4] The English, nevertheless, evacuated Savannah and Charleston to concentrate at New York.

Holland had likewise rejected the offers of a separate treaty

[1] *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. pp. 217–244; *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. IV. pp. 61–71; L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime*, t. II. pp. 517–526; Adolphus, *Reign of George III.*, book xliii.

[2] *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. p. 246.

[3] He had the humanity to spare a storehouse filled with provisions, in order that the English, who had fled into the woods, might find something on their return on which to subsist. — *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. p. 422.

[4] *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, t. IV. p 76.

Digitized by Google

which England had addressed to her through the medium of Russia, unfaithful to the *armed neutrality*.

In Europe, the operations displayed activity, this year, at a single point alone. Minorca once reconquered, the court of Spain had but one thought, — at any price to recover Gibraltar, which, blockaded for three years, had been several times revictualled, but which, nevertheless, was reduced to painful extremities. The wisest course seemed to be to complete the blockade, and to profit by the superiority of the combined fleets to attempt to prevent any new assistance. The Spaniards lost patience. Their first siege works had been destroyed by a vigorous sortie of the garrison (November, 1781): they reëstablished and increased them. An attack by main force upon the impregnable rock of Gibraltar was resolved on. Two French princes, the Count d'Artois and the Duke de Bourbon, hastened to witness this great spectacle. On the land side, an immense battery of more than two hundred pieces of artillery was stretched across the whole peninsula. On the side of the sea, ten floating batteries, — large ships razeed, protected with enormous pieces of wood, covered with cork and green hides, and furnished within with tanks of water, — carrying one hundred and fifty guns and mortars, were to be supported by a flotilla of gunboats and by the great Franco-Spanish fleet.

The fleet, commanded by the aged Cordova, and numbering forty-five ships of the line, arrived September 12, having captured on its way a large English convoy destined for Canada and Newfoundland. The next day, a deluge of fire inundated Gibraltar. The straits resounded, for a whole day and night, with a tempest of artillery, which carried dismay even among the inhabitants of Morocco. The storm passed in vain. On the land side, the myriads of projectiles, hurled by the assailants, uselessly struck the hollow rocks in which the enemy's cannon were concealed. On the side of the sea, the attack was badly concerted. The anchorage had been imperfectly reconnoitred: part of the floating batteries ran aground; the rest were injudiciously posted. The means invented to protect them from the red-hot shot were found inadequate. They were burned, some by the enemy, the rest by their crews, obliged to abandon them under the fire of the English, which drowned the greater part of these unfortunates. The fleet had been prevented by the sea from participating in the action.

After this unhappy engagement, the blockade was resumed; but the sea still favored the English. In consequence of a tem-

Digitized by Google

pest which had injured and dispersed the combined fleet, Admiral Howe, who had arrived from England with thirty-four ships of the line, succeeded in crossing the straits, and revictualling Gibraltar anew. The Franco-Spanish fleet was unable to overtake him until he had recrossed the straits. The vanguard of the confederates, commanded by La Motte-Piquet, warmly cannonaded and injured the English rearguard; but Admiral Howe avoided a general engagement, and regained the British waters (October 10–21).

The year 1782, which had begun so badly for the English, had become relatively fortunate for them; as, in the state of their affairs, they were fortunate in being able to defend themselves successfully, and in ceasing to lose. This year had cost the Spaniards and French great losses of men and *matériel*, fifteen ships of the line and four frigates: the English had lost only four ships and six frigates.

The great ministry, the successor of Lord North, did not profit by this partial change of fortune. This cabinet, so rich in celebrities, had been dissolved in less than four months, on account of personal questions. Fox, Burke, and Sheridan had quitted the ministry, and, by one of those singular combinations which are not infrequent in a parliamentary government, had coalesced with their former enemy, Lord North, against Lord Shelburne and the other ministers in office, among whom the younger William Pitt had just taken his place; a man of iron head and heart, an old politician at twenty-three, and as strong in will, of better sustained ability in public affairs, and less magnanimous, than his father.

The successes in the West Indies and at Gibraltar did not suffice to reassure England, or to impose silence on the desire for peace which had been energetically manifested for some time within her limits. It was known that a colossal Franco-Spanish expedition was in preparation for the beginning of 1783: none knew whither it would be directed; and, this time, the star of Rodney might pale. A single defeat would have been irreparable. Meanwhile, the conquests in India, which promised to replace the empire lost by England in America, were seriously endangered. The genius of France, which had withdrawn with Dupleix from these rich countries, returned thither in a menacing manner with Suffren.

In the interval in the American War caused by the peace of 1763, the British rule in India, despite a partial reverse from Hy-

Digitized by Google

der Ali, had assumed enormous proportions. The English East-India Company, the master of Bengal and the maritime Circars in its own name, as the feudatory of the imperial phantom of Delhi and the Subahdar of the Deccan, and the master of the Carnatic in the name of the nabob, its protégé, or rather its slave, reigned despotically over all the eastern coast: it ruled the centre of Upper Hindostan, by turning to its advantage the last relics of the authority of the Great Mogul, and the centre of the peninsula, by substituting its influence for that formerly exercised by Bussi over the Subahdar of the Deccan; and had, lastly, strongly established itself on the western coast. But two adversaries of importance remained to it: in the west and the centre, the empire of the Mahrattas,—a revival of ancient India amidst the dissolution of the Great Mogul monarchy, the feudalism of the Kshatriyas (the military caste), governed by a council of Brahmins; and, in the south, the warlike monarchy of Mysore, improvised by the Mussulman, Hyder Ali.

At the beginning of 1779, an Anglo-Indian army, which had moved upon Poonah, the capital of the Mahrattas, was hemmed in, and forced to capitulate. At this signal, the aged Hyder Ali, at peace with the English for the last ten years, took up arms anew, allied himself with the Mahrattas and the Subahdar of the Deccan, and fell upon the Carnatic. A few hundred French adventurers, the relics of the renowned bands of Bussi, joyfully marched against the English under the banners of the Sultan of Mysore. After incidents which we need not recount (September 9, 1780), half of the English army was destroyed in the forests of Conjeveram. Almost all of the vast nabobship of the Carnatic, with its capital, Arcot, fell into the power of Hyder Ali. In the course of the following year (1781), a great rebellion broke out in the *holy city* of the Brahmins, Benares, against the tyrants of the Ganges. The atrocious government of Warren Hastings had driven these peaceful tribes to extremities.[1] Had a French expedition landed at this moment on the coast of Coromandel, the English power would have been annihilated in the Carnatic and the Circars, and greatly encroached upon everywhere else.

[1] Under Lord Clive, millions of men had perished by a great famine, not caused, but aggravated, by the barbarous cupidity of English speculators. Specious efforts have been made to justify Lord Clive personally; but it is impossible to find excuses for Hastings, though many historians treat him with inexplicable indulgence. His political genius was incontestable; but his morality was that of a leader of robbers. — See in the *Hist. de la fondation de l'Empire anglaise dans l'Inde*, by M. Barchou de Penhoën (t. III. liv. ix.), the hideous stories of women and old men tortured in order to wrest from them their treasures!

Digitized by Google

Sartine and Montbarrei did not send a single soldier to India! Sartine despatched to the Isle of France, from 1779 to 1780, five ships of the line, one of which was taken on the way. It was absurd to send ships without land forces. The commodore who commanded at the Isle of France might nevertheless have acted in the Indian seas, where the English had at first but two ships, and numbered but six at the close of 1779; but this commodore was that same Tronjoli who had shamefully abandoned the valorous Bellecombe in Pondicherry. He did not even show himself on the coasts of India; and in 1780 departed, intrusting the command to Captain d'Orves, a brave man, but ill, and worn out in mind and body. It seemed as if officers and ships unfit for service were expressly chosen for India. M. d'Orves did not appear on the coast of Coromandel until February, 1781. The English squadron was at Malabar. Hyder Ali hastened to the coast to concert with the French. Any enterprise might have been undertaken. The English army had evacuated Pondicherry to retire to St. David, where it was shut in by Hyder Ali; and Madras was uncovered, guarded only by five hundred invalids. D'Orves refused either to operate with his squadron, or to land the men of his vessels to reënforce the French auxiliaries of Hyder Ali, and returned to the Isle of France.[1] Hyder Ali, abandoned, valiantly continued the strife, and fought three battles in as many months with the English, who had received considerable assistance from Bengal (July–September, 1781). Three times he was constrained to yield the field of battle to European discipline; but the enemy was never able either to take from him his artillery, or to prevent him from reorganizing and maintaining himself in the Carnatic.

The English had more fruitful successes elsewhere. From November, 1781, to January, 1782, they took possession of Negapatam and some other Dutch settlements on the coast of Coromandel; then of Trincomalee, the best part of the Dutch island of Ceylon. The Mahrattas, meanwhile, were in full negotiation with the Supreme Council of Calcutta, which offered them an advantageous peace; and Hyder Ali himself, no longer counting on the French, was disposed to treat; when a man at length arrived in these waters, determined to employ all the powers of his heroic

[1] *Mém. MSS. du vicomte de Souillac*, in the archives of the marine, quoted by Ch. Cunat; *Hist. du bailli de Suffren*, p. 86, 1852. M. de Souillac was the Governor of the Isle of France.

Digitized by Google

genius to prevent the English power from strengthening itself, — the Bailli de SUFFREN.[1]

The new minister Castries, more resolute than enlightened, had not seen soon enough the necessity of repairing lost time by sending land forces to India; but he had at least the good sense to listen to D'Estaing in the choice of the leader of the naval forces which he despatched to the East. The brave admiral urgently recommended one of his former captains, in whom he had discerned the material for a great army commander. Suffren was placed at the head of five ships of the line,[2] commissioned to protect against the English the important Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope; then to operate in the waters of India. An English squadron of five ships of the line, three frigates, ten vessels of the East-India Company, etc., set out for the same destination. The possession of the Cape was the goal of the race; and the English vessels, all of which were copper-bottomed, were better sailers than ours. Suffren encountered the enemy at the Cape Verd Islands; audaciously attacked him in the Portuguese roadstead of Porto Praya (in the Island of Santiago), April 16, 1781; threw the English expedition into confusion; arrived before it; put the Cape of Good Hope in a state of defence; left some soldiers there; repaired to the Isle of France; persuaded his superior, Commodore d'Orves, to endeavor to repair the deplorable retreat of the preceding February; and set out with him for India, carrying the best part of the garrison of the Isle of France, nearly three thousand soldiers, whom the zealous Governor Souillac intrusted to him without orders from the ministry.

The squadron began its career in the waters of India by the capture of a fifty-gun ship. The winds protected from the French the six ships of Admiral Hughes, who took refuge in the roadstead of Madras, where he was joined by three of the ships which Suffren had encountered at Porto Praya, then bravely issued forth to offer battle. The English had nine ships against twelve, but in a much better condition than ours. Suffren had the chief command. D'Orves had just died on board; thus nobly expiating the faults due to the weakening of disease. Had Suffren been well seconded, the English squadron would probably have been destroyed; but the lack of energy or the ill-will of part

[1] He had been called the commander, then the bailli, on account of his successive rank in the Order of Malta.

[2] Without frigates; an unpardonable error in the ministry. An army without light troops!

Digitized by Google

of the captains, dissatisfied at seeing themselves commanded by a junior officer, rendered the victory indecisive (February 17, 1782). These internal jealousies were the disgrace and the scourge of our navy. The English, however, seemed to acknowledge themselves conquered by abandoning the field of battle; and Suffren achieved his end by preventing Hyder Ali from treating with the enemy,[1] and landing at Porto Novo the troops designed to coöperate with the Mussulman hero; after which he returned to the coast of Ceylon in search of the English squadron, which had been reënforced by two ships. On the same day that De Grasse was conquered and taken in the West Indies (April 12, 1782), Suffren fought a second and terrible battle with Edward Hughes. The misconduct of two ships prevented him from obtaining a complete success, and a storm separated the squadrons. The English avoided a new engagement. Meanwhile Suffren received orders from the ministry to return to the Isle of France. His withdrawal would have destroyed the brilliant moral effect of his exploits. He generously disobeyed, although he had neither a harbor for shelter nor rigging for repairs, and scarcely any munitions or money. His genius, and the passionate devotion of the sailors, utter strangers to the unworthy calculations of certain of their leaders, supplied the place of every thing.

It was not, however, with a view to a shameful abandonment that the ministry had desired to recall Suffren to the Isle of France, but in order to concentrate an imposing force on this island, chosen as the point of attack. The ministry had resolved on a course, which, three years sooner, would have been productive of immense results: it despatched to India a man whose name still fascinated the imaginations of all, and who might have been worth an army, — the faithful companion of Dupleix, Bussi-Castelnau. Bussi, appointed commander-in-chief, arrived at the Isle of France, May 31, 1782; and stopped there to wait for the reënforcements promised by the cabinet of Versailles. The measures adopted, however, were unfortunate or imprudent: two important convoys, too feebly escorted, were captured on quitting the Channel, or driven back into the French ports (December, 1781–April, 1782). Bussi, ill, and a prey to impatience and anxiety, provisionally sent to Suffren all that was at his disposal, — two ships, a frigate, and some soldiers.

Suffren had just had a third encounter with Admiral Hughes.

[1] On the day after the naval engagement (February 18), Tippoo Saib, the son of Hyder Ali, destroyed an Anglo-Indian corps in Tanjore.

Digitized by Google

As badly seconded on the land as on the sea, he had vainly urged the commander of the land forces to recapture the key of the beautiful territory of Tanjore, Negapatam, wrested by the English from Holland. This commander chose, instead, to take possession of St. David, a place badly situated, and offering nothing but a simple open roadstead; and Suffren resolved to attack Negapatam himself, with the coöperation of Hyder Ali. It was necessary, first, to defeat the English squadron which covered this place. Suffren vigorously attacked it, with eleven ships against eleven better equipped; for the captain of the twelfth French ship, slightly damaged, shamefully deserted the line of battle. Another captain, whose ship of sixty-four guns was engaged with an English seventy-four, struck his flag; upon which two of those *officiers bleus*,[1] disdained by the vanity of the officers of the Great Corps, rushed to their cowardly commander, forced him to hoist his flag anew, ordered the fire to continue, and saved the ship. The ignominy of this captain was fully effaced by the heroism of Cuverville, who sustained, with a fifty-gun ship, the terrible fire of two ships of seventy-four and sixty-four guns, and, himself cut to pieces, disabled the stronger of his enemies. As to Suffren, he was worthy of himself: no more need be said. He was found everywhere, by turns attacking the enemy, or covering our ships in peril. Part of the English squadron gave way, and Hughes retired; but he regained the anchorage of Negapatam, and Suffren was not sufficiently a victor to effect his project (July 6, 1782). He indemnified himself by the recapture of the other Dutch settlement, Trincomalee; and at last conquered an excellent harbor, the possession of which wholly changed the position of the two parties in these waters (August 25–31). Edward Hughes arrived too late to succor it: he found, on coming in sight of the lost Trincomalee, only a fourth battle (September 3). Three French ships of the line, two of fifty and forty guns, and three transports, attacked twelve ships of the line and six transports. The same mistakes, or rather the same treachery, recurred. Suffren, a moment abandoned in the centre of the battle with two ships against five or six, saw his mainmast and his admiral's flag fall under a hail of shot. A hurrah of triumph rose from the English flag-ship. "Flags, flags!" exclaimed Suffren: "plant them everywhere around the *Héros!*"[2] The whole crew, partaking the desperate heroism of their leader,

[1] Port-officers, employed as *auxiliaries* with a brevet for the campaign.

[2] The name of his ship.

Digitized by Google

poured forth bullets and grape from every port-hole. Three English ships were riddled and cut to pieces by this furious onslaught. The French vanguard at length released its admiral, and the English beat a retreat during the night.

This bloody action retarded the plans of the English against St. David; but it had many other results. The leader of the odious cabal which had well-nigh caused the destruction of Suffren rendered partial justice to himself by requesting to set out for France with his accomplices, and the squadron was finally purged from them; but the harm which they had done appeared irreparable. They had prevented Suffren from insuring the stability of fortune. The French forces were diminishing: two of our ships had foundered at sea. The English, on the contrary, received a reënforcement of five ships; and the Dutch, whose colonies we had saved or recovered, gave us no assistance: a squadron of seven ships remained stationary at Batavia, another armament at the Cape! The Dutch commanders were paralyzed by the incurable perfidy of the stadtholder, whom the republican party had weakened without overthrowing.

The winds, so often favorable to our rivals, came this time to our aid. A hurricane disabled the enemy's squadron just as it was setting sail from Madras for Bombay (October 15), and unfitted it for service for several months. Suffren was unable to profit by the misfortune of Edward Hughes: he had agreed to meet Bussi in the roads of Acheen (the Island of Sumatra), for the purpose of returning together to attack Madras in concert with Hyder Ali; but the troops, which had at length joined Bussi in the Isle of France, were ravaged to such an extent by an epidemic, and the ships which transported them were in so bad a condition, that the junction of Bussi and Suffren, instead of taking place at Acheen in November, could not be effected until March 10, 1783, on the coast of Ceylon. A fatal event had occurred during the interval: one of the proudest and most profound geniuses that the East had ever produced had disappeared from the world: Hyder Ali was no more (December 7, 1782). It was a terrible blow to the French cause and to Suffren. These two great men had understood and fully relied upon each other.

Bussi and Suffren had no one to sustain their efforts but the son of Hyder Ali, Tippoo Saib, the inheritor, if not of his genius, at least of his courage and his hatred of England. But the position of affairs had greatly changed when Bussi landed at St. David, March 15, 1783, with twenty-five hundred soldiers. Tippoo, who,

Digitized by Google

at the moment of his father's death, had just completed the capture of Tanjore from the English, had been obliged to abandon this glorious conquest, and to quit the Carnatic to fly to the aid of the possessions of Mysore in the West. The English, tranquil with respect to the Mahrattas, who had just concluded a definitive peace on the news of the death of Hyder Ali, had made a powerful diversion from Bombay against the Mysore provinces of Malabar and Canara. Almost all of this coast rapidly fell into their power, and the interior of Mysore was encroached upon. Tippoo, on marching to Malabar, had only been able to leave ten thousand men in the Carnatic to take the field with the French. Bussi, greatly inferior in force to the English, did not, perhaps, derive all the advantage that he might have done from the resources at his disposal: grown old, tormented with the gout, and weakened by the effects of the epidemic with which he had been attacked at the Isle of France, he was no longer the brilliant and indefatigable companion of Dupleix; and little remained to him but his courage. He suffered himself to be forced back on St. David by the English general, Stuart, who had indeed nearly twenty thousand regular troops, of which four thousand were English, against from nine to ten thousand, twenty-two hundred of which were French.

June 13, a furious battle was fought under the walls of St. David. In the presence of the cannon, Bussi became himself again. Unable to keep his horse, he caused himself to be carried everywhere in a palanquin into the thickest of the fight. The English lost from a thousand to twelve hundred men, and were unable to force the French lines. During the night, however, on the news that the enemy was about to plant batteries of heavy masses of artillery, Bussi evacuated the outworks of the place, and shut himself up in St. David. The place was blockaded between Stuart's army and Hughes's squadron, which had finally returned from Bombay.

This did not last long. On the day after the battle, the sentinels on the rampart signalled Suffren in the offing. June 16, by skilful evolutions, Suffren succeeded in evading the English fleet, and opening communication with St. David. The two squadrons continued to manœuvre four days in sight of the city and the two armies; and it was not until the 20th that they engaged in their fifth battle within sixteen months. The English had the superiority at once in numbers and in armament, — sixteen ships of the line, and two fifty-gun ships, against thirteen ships of the line,

Digitized by Google

two fifty-gun ships, and one ship of forty guns. In this action, however, every one did his duty on board our fleet. By the command of Suffren, all our vessels approached the enemy within pistol-range. This fact suffices to indicate how terrible was the engagement. Among many tragical and glorious incidents must be cited the heroism of the *Flamand*, a fifty-gun ship, which, after suffering greatly, and losing its captain in the beginning of the action, attacked an eighty-gun ship which was attempting to break through our line, and forced it to retreat. The English gave way, closely pressed, under the incessant volleys of the artillery which shattered them. Darkness came to cover their retreat. Admiral Hughes escaped a new engagement by his superiority in sailing, and took refuge at Madras. Suffren triumphantly reappeared before St. David, June 23, and landed his men amidst the shouts of rejoicing of the French army, who demanded that the English lines should be attacked the next day. Bussi has been reproached for having hesitated, and for having only permitted a partial sortie on the 25th, which was badly conducted, and was repelled by the enemy. Despite this trifling success, cut off from the sea, confronted by a garrison reënforced and full of ardor, and harassed in its rear by several thousand Mysore horsemen, who intercepted its supplies, the English army was greatly endangered. Its defeat appeared merely postponed. The news was excellent for the French. French and Dutch convoys were on the way from the Isle of France. Tippoo Saib, worthy of his father, had just captured in Bednore the main body of the English forces which had ravaged Malabar with a cruelty and rapacity unworthy of a civilized army. Our cause was reviving in India; and all might still be repaired.

During the interval, June 29, an English frigate brought different intelligence to Suffren and Bussi. Peace was concluded; and India remained definitively in the hands of the English, in compensation for the loss of America![1]

From 1779 to 1781, Austria and Russia had made some attempts to offer their mediation to the belligerent powers, which had been ineffectual; England having declined any negotiation in

[1] Concerning the campaigns in India, see *Hist. du bailli de Suffren*, by Ch. Cunat, Rennes, 1852; *Hist. de la fondation de l'Empire anglais dans l'Inde*, by Barchou de Penhoën, t. III. liv. x.–xi. The last of the great mariners of ancient France was mortally wounded in a duel, December 8, 1788, by a courtier, the Prince de Mirepoix, whose nephews, naval officers, he had treated with merited severity. The cause of his death was kept concealed. — See Ch. Cunat, p. 345.

Digitized by Google

which the *rebel colonies* were admitted. Joseph II. and Catharine, who dreamed together of the partition of the Ottoman empire, were not doubtless sincerely desirous of a peace which would restore leisure to the maritime powers to counteract their projects; but Russia followed her inclination to meddle with every thing, and Austria was inclined to renew her former relations with England.[1]

The aged Maurepas died, meanwhile (November 14, 1781), after having done all the harm that he could do to France by overthrowing Necker after Turgot. His death, which would have been a great blessing had it happened sooner, was an unimportant event: affairs went on after him as they would have done had he lived. No one completely took his place with the King: the chief influence, however, fell to the minister of foreign affairs, M. de Vergennes, who succeeded to the title of chief of the council of finance. Vergennes, far from being capable of bearing the burden of prime minister, was not even equal to great emergencies in his own special ministry. He was speedily to be put to the test.

In March, 1782, during the closing days of the cabinet of Lord North, this minister, bending under the reverses of the preceding campaign, had despatched an agent to Paris to sound the French government. The negotiations were continued in behalf of the new cabinet which replaced Lord North, and which, meanwhile, taking the opposite course from the fallen ministry, had thought at first of negotiating with America and Holland while continuing the war against the House of Bourbon. Alike repulsed at Paris by the illustrious plenipotentiary of the United States, Franklin (April 15), and in America by Congress itself (May), the English ministry resigned itself to the necessity of entering upon a simultaneous negotiation at Paris with France, Spain, America, and Holland. Louis XVI., or rather M. de Vergennes, in a note to the English envoy, accepted as a basis the treaty of Paris, with the exception of certain changes to be agreed upon; among other points, relative to the East Indies, to Africa, to the Newfoundland fishery, and to a commercial treaty. No special mention was made of the

[1] Joseph II. even attempted to detach Spain from France by offering to secure for her the restoration of Gibraltar (August, 1780). Carlos III. loyally rejected this lure. — Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 59, according to a memorial found among the papers of Louis XVI. According to W. Coxe (*Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. V.), the Spanish cabinet was less scrupulous; and would gladly have treated, had the English seriously offered it Gibraltar.

Digitized by Google

West Indies. This starting-point was feeble, and promised little, — the acceptance as a basis of the deplorable treaty of 1763!

The modification which occurred in the English ministry, the retirement of Mr. Fox and his friends (the end of June, 1782), did not affect the progress of the negotiation. The interests of France were very tamely sustained therein. The warmest and longest discussion was concerning those of Spain. Carlos III. obstinately demanded Gibraltar. England defended the citadel of the great straits by diplomacy as by arms: the prime minister, Lord Shelburne, nevertheless, finally seemed disposed to yield, but at the price of the restitution of Minorca and the Floridas, and of vast concessions in the West Indies; then he became terrified at the thought of giving up Gibraltar, even for such a ransom, and offered instead the cession of Minorca and the Floridas. Spain accepted.

There had been no serious difficulty with the French cabinet except on a single point, the Island of Dominica. Louis XVI., urged on by a few of his ministers, especially by Castries, at first showed some firmness. This question should never have been yielded. Dominica, so happily conquered, was of importance only as an offensive position against the wealthy islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Lord Shelburne refused to abandon it. His refusal should have been accepted, and a new campaign begun. All the chances were in our favor. An immense Franco-Spanish fleet was assembled at Cadiz in order to operate at the beginning of 1783. D'Estaing, the favorite leader of the soldiers and the sailors, at length recalled to the head of our armies, was to command sixty-six ships of the line and a land force of twenty-four thousand soldiers, with La Fayette for major-general. This whirlwind of men and ships was to burst first upon Jamaica, and afterwards to proceed to Canada and Newfoundland; and a squadron of ten ships was to be detached to the East Indies. Holland, wresting herself from the intrigues of the stadtholder, was at last in a position to participate seriously in the war in Asia. England had not the forces necessary to repel so terrible a shock; and every thing seemed to announce great reverses in India, and perhaps the loss of what remained to her in America, both islands and continent.[1]

Lord Shelburne knew the perils of England; but he also knew the immoderate desire for peace which M. de Vergennes had suf-

[1] *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 3, *et seq.*; Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. pp. 12–26; Flassan, t. VII. p. 362.

Digitized by Google

fered to transpire.[1] He gained the cause! Louis XVI. consented to restore Dominica, and George III. announced to the British parliament the hope of a speedy peace.

An incident well-nigh overthrew every thing. At the end of November, the American commissioners, Franklin, John Adams, John Jay, and Henry Laurens, signed the preliminaries of peace at Paris with the English plenipotentiary, Oswald, instead of waiting, as had been agreed upon, for the treaty of France to be finished, that both might be signed at the same time. At this intelligence, Lord Richmond, the younger Pitt, and the greater part of the members of the English cabinet, wished to break off the negotiation with France, and to offer the Americans a close alliance against her. The chimerical spirit of Lord Richmond, and the passionate hatred of France which the second Pitt had inherited, blinded them to the precipice towards which they were hurrying England. Lord Shelburne threw himself in their way with despairing energy, and arrested them.[2] They had refused to see that one of the leading clauses of the preliminaries with the United States provided that the agreements should be of no effect until after the conclusion of peace with France; that is, that the Americans would continue the war until their allies had received satisfaction. America was so little inclined to the arrangement dreamed of by the English, that the secretary of foreign affairs of the United States, Livingston, strongly censured the *lack of courtesy* of which the plenipotentiaries had rendered themselves guilty, as was acknowledged by Franklin, who "had yielded too easily to his colleagues."[3] As to the idea of a league with England against France, an idea which was certainly very far from the thoughts of Franklin and his colleagues, it would have been hooted at in Congress.

The preliminaries of peace between France and England and between England and Spain were signed January 10, 1783. The parliament received them by a violent storm. Lord Shelburne lost his place in return for the service which he had rendered his country in obtaining conditions of peace much less disadvantageous than comported with the situation, but far different from

[1] "Had your court shown less desire to end the war, it would have obtained greater sacrifices from us."— Words of Lord Shelburne to M. de Bouillé, cited in the memorial to the King, ap. Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 17.

[2] Garden, *Hist. des Traités de paix*, t. IV. p. 329.

[3] Letter from M. de Vergennes, cited by P. Chasles; art. *Franklin*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. XXVI. p. 294; 1841. This study on Franklin, very unfriendly, and more witty than accurate, should be read with much reservation.

Digitized by Google

that treaty of 1763 to which British pride would have gladly chained history. The singular coalition of Fox and North arrived at power, but took good care not to refuse the ratification of the compact which it had censured. Sundry secondary points concerning the interpretation of certain articles relative to Spain, but, above all, the compromise with Holland, retarded the definitive treaties some months longer. The cabinet of Versailles committed the fault of concluding the preliminaries before the interests of Holland were regulated; a fault less grave in point of decorum than that of the American commissioners towards France, since the obligations were not the same, but more serious, in point of fact, in its consequences. England, too sure that the cabinet of Versailles would not reopen hostilities, was inflexible in her demands on Holland; and the latter was forced to open the waters of the Moluccas to European commerce, and to cede Negapatam, the best roadstead on the coast of Coromandel.

The definitive treaties were signed September 3, 1783.

England recognized the full independence of the United States, withdrew her troops from New York and from the other parts of the American territory which she still occupied, and acknowledged as the boundaries of the United States the River St. Croix, the mountains which separate the basin of the St. Lawrence from the basins of the North-American rivers, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi to the thirty-first degree of north latitude. South of this latitude, as west of the Mississippi, England reserved her rights only to cede them to Spain. The Americans had the right of fishery off Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

England restored to France the Islands of St. Peter and Miquelon, in *full possession;* that is, without renewing the interdiction to fortify them, stipulated in the treaty of 1763. France renounced the right of fishery on the part of the eastern coast of Newfoundland between Cape Bona Vista and Cape St. John, and acquired it on the part of the western coast between Port-à-Choix and Cape Ray: an extremely disadvantageous exchange; for the fishing is much better on the eastern coast of Newfoundland, which fronts the Grand Bank and the offing, than on the western shore.[1]

England restored to France, in the West Indies, the Island

[1] An excellent Memorial, addressed to Vergennes by the consuls of St. Malo, had nevertheless fully informed the ministry concerning the Newfoundland question. — See this Memorial in Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 387.

Digitized by Google

of St. Lucia, and abandoned Tobago. France restored Grenada and the Grenadine Islands, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Christopher, Nevis, and Montserrat. England abandoned Senegal and its dependencies (Podor, Galam, Arguin, and Portendic), and restored Gorée, which the French had evacuated in order to concentrate at St. Louis in Senegal, and which the English had occupied. France guaranteed to England Fort St. James and Gambia. The English were empowered to carry on the gum trade from the mouth of the St. John's River to Portendic. England restored Pondicherry and Karikal, with the cession of a small territory around them, Mahé, and Chandernagore, "with the liberty to surround it with a ditch for the purpose of carrying off the water," (what a favor!) and the French factories at Orixa, Surat, etc. She promised the French the reëstablishment of free trade as it was formerly carried on by the Indian Company of France. "It is agreed," says the treaty, "that if, within the term of four months, the respective allies (in India) have not assented to the present pacification, or made a separate accommodation, no direct or indirect assistance shall longer be given them."

This was the complete abandonment of the Sultan of Mysore.[1]

England consented to the abrogation of the prohibition to fortify Dunkirk and restore its harbor. The insult to the old age of Louis the Great was at least effaced by rejuvenated France.

The two crowns agreed to conclude a commercial treaty before January 1, 1786.[2]

England ceded Minorca and the two Floridas to Spain. Spain restored the Bahama Islands.

Holland ceded Negapatam, and promised not to obstruct English navigation in the Eastern waters (the waters of the Spice Islands), so long monopolized by the Dutch.[3]

Despite all that has been said of this peace, which did not adequately repair the calamities of 1763, France had accomplished a very great work. The philosophy of the eighteenth century had had its *crusade*, more successful than those of the Middle Ages A new phenomenon arose from it in the political world. Hitherto, aristocracy had scarcely ever been seen radically extirpated except

[1] Tippoo Saib bravely continued the contest, and obtained an honorable peace.

[2] All the copies of the treaty were drawn up in French, "from which no inference was to be drawn."

[3] See the treaties in the *Hist. des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, by Soulès, t. IV., documents.

Digitized by Google

by despotism: aristocracy, that is, the liberty of the few, was lost in the equality of servitude. When this partial liberty, let us say in passing, disappears in such a manner that liberty no longer exists anywhere, we do not see wherein the dignity or the progress of the human race is the gainer. America set the first great example in the contrary direction,— the example of liberty in equality, of true democracy, succeeding to aristocratic liberty; the first and the triumphant application of the theory of right according to the eighteenth century. Elsewhere, on a soil more imperfectly prepared, and formed of more complex elements, this theory, brought back from America to the place of its origin by our knights of liberty, would exact far more terrible efforts, and obtain successes far more questionable and more painful, in its work, overthrown again and again, and as often resumed!

France had accomplished the duties of her providential mission: her moral interests, the interests of her glory and her ideas, were satisfied. The interests of her material power had been badly defended by her government: the only solid advantage which she had obtained was that of depriving the English of Minorca, that curb on Toulon, far more dangerous to us in their hands than Gibraltar. The most important reason alleged by Vergennes for hastening peace had been the state of the finances. As early as September 27, 1780, he wrote to the King that "the alarming state of affairs . . . seemed to leave no resource but the most speedy peace." Necker had once more revived public credit at the beginning of 1781 by a brilliant stroke to which we shall revert, and would have also found means of supporting the campaign of 1783; but the fatal cabal which had overthrown Turgot had not been long in overthrowing Necker in turn, and Vergennes had been one of the most active members of this cabal. The relapse of the finances was therefore his condemnation. "The expenses," he said to the King, "are an abyss which none can fathom."

This abyss, indeed, was about to swallow up the monarchy,

[1] Flassan, t. VII. p. 361. England, on her side, was in extreme financial distress. Her annual debt had risen from £4,500,000 to £9,500,000: the tax on real estate, and the other taxes, were enormous. England had lost, since the beginning of the war, sixteen ships of from fifty to one hundred and ten guns, and forty-nine frigates or corvettes of from twenty to forty guns; France, nineteen ships and twenty-nine frigates and corvettes. — See the list in the *Hist. de Suffren*, by Ch. Cunat, *pièces justific.* No. 32. The war had cost France more than twelve hundred million francs; England, more than double this amount.

Digitized by Google

as a punishment for not having been wise enough to fill it up in time by casting into it the privileges.

The American War at once postponed and paved the way for the Revolution: it afforded a temporary diversion abroad to the most energetic sentiments of France; but these sentiments returned to us, defined and strengthened by the sight of facts more powerful than books and theories,[1] at the same time that the heavy burdens of the war, clogging the car of State, which was not lightened in compensation by a radical reform, accelerated the impulse which precipitated it over the fatal declivity.[2]

[1] The presence of Franklin at Paris, personifying the republic under a form so worthy of respect, exercised a great moral influence. Our philosophers, in discussing with him at Paris the American Constitution, prepared themselves to discuss the future laws of the French Revolution. A royalist publicist, Mallet-Dupan, has preserved for us a great saying, which Franklin, he says, repeated more than once to his *pupils at Paris*: "He who shall carry into politics the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world."

[2] In justice to our readers, we would state that the annotations to the preceding chapter proffered by Mr. Bancroft, and announced in the Preface to *The Age of Louis XIV.*, have been withheld by that gentleman from the after-consideration that it would be presumptuous to annotate M. Martin's *chef d'œuvre*. — Tr.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

LOUIS XVI. (CONTINUED.)

NECKER'S MINISTRY. Financial Condition of France under Necker and his Successors, to 1783. Economic and Judicial Improvements. Provincial Assemblies. *Official Report of the Finances.* Dismission of Necker. Reaction. Death of Maurepas. Calonne called to the Finances. MANNERS, IDEAS, LETTERS, AND SCIENCES after the American War. The Circle of the Queen. *The Marriage of Figaro.* Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Lagrange. LAVOISIER. The Aeronauts. Condorcet. Mystical Movement. Mesmer. Saint-Martin. Free-Masonry. MIRABEAU.

1778–1789.

IT has been necessary to postpone the exposition of the internal operations of Necker in order not to interrupt the narrative of military events. We must now sum up these operations, for the purpose of presenting, in all its different phases, the state of France after the peace of 1783.

From his entrance into the finances until the opening of hostilities against England, we have seen Necker laboring to put the public accounts in order, and to pave the way for the reformation of the sinecures and waste in the King's household, the collection of the taxes, and the hospitals. The war once entered into, his first duty and his most lively anxiety was necessarily to provide for its expenses. He did this by borrowing, without levying new taxes, and without giving the lenders any other pledge or guarantee than the promise to reduce the expenditures in order to liberate a part of the revenue. Whatever may have been said by his adversaries,[1] he did the best that could have been done:[2] for taxation, even though ruinous, — even though exaggerated to impossibility, — would not have given him what he obtained by loans; and France was assuredly in one of those crises in which it is legitimate to burden the future. Necker borrowed, in the midst of war, on conditions which other ministers, Turgot excepted, would scarcely have obtained in time of peace.[3]

[1] The most violent was Mirabeau. — See his pamphlet of 1787, *Lettre sur l'administration de M. Necker.*

[2] In a financial point of view; for a reservation should be made, in a moral point of view, as to the methods employed in most of his loans, — lotteries and life-*rentes*.

[3] There were exceptions, nevertheless. Necker deceived himself, or was deceived, in

Digitized by Google

He none the less continued the internal reforms, so far as the state of affairs permitted. If he did few great things, if nothing in him revealed vast plans like those of Turgot, it must at least be admitted that all the modifications which he introduced into the financial system were well conceived. He had begun and he completed the centralization of the accountability in the royal treasury, so that the government could annually take an account of its receipts and expenditures, — a thing which had long been impossible, a very large part of the expenditures for which different funds were assigned not having been recorded on the books of the keeper of the treasury. He caused a general list of the pensions to be made: this simple measure, by revealing to the King the duplications and abuses of all kinds, concealed by the financial confusion, influenced him to authorize a reform, which Necker, however, did not dare to solicit immediately. Necker resumed at the top of the scale the reduction of financial offices which Turgot had entered upon at the bottom. He reduced to twelve the forty-eight receivers-general, and interdicted to them all disposal of funds without the permission of the minister; he reduced to two the twenty-seven treasurers of war and the marine, with the same interdiction, and thus succeeded in depriving these two ministries of their financial independence towards the minister of finance. More than five hundred offices, that is to say, more than five hundred sinecures, involving privileges with respect to taxation, were abolished in the King's household (1779–1780).

A decree of the council, August 15, 1779, acknowledging that "the numerous tolls levied on the highways and navigable rivers, . . . duties which, for the most part, had grown out of the misfortunes and confusion of ancient times, . . . fettered and embarrassed commerce, and formed so many obstacles to the facility of intercourse," enjoined on all the proprietors of these rights immediately to communicate their titles to them to the council, in order that arrangements might be made for their redemption with an indemnity. Another decree of the council, of great importance, January 9, 1780, effected a profound change in the administration of the indirect taxes. The intention of "throwing off the former dependence upon financial aid" was explicitly declared therein: Necker aimed at having to deal with no other financiers than the bankers who subscribed to his loans. The power

some of his schemes of life-*rentes* and tontines, by his former fellows, the Genevese bankers, who, however, procured him very large sums, — one hundred millions, it is said.

Digitized by Google

ful company of farmers-general was divided into three companies, — 1st, The *general farm*, which retained nothing but the *traites* (external and internal customs), the salt-taxes, and the tobaccoes; 2d, The *general administration by the government* (*régie*), which had the aids or excise duties, and other duties on the manufacture of various articles of commerce; 3d, The *general administration of the domains and domanial rights*, rights to which was adjoined the collection of the *droit de greffe* (the right of selling various offices connected with the custody of judicial and notarial acts) and of the mortgage fees. The farmers-general were entitled, besides five per cent on their security of twelve hundred thousand francs, to a regular salary of thirty thousand francs, together with a share in the revenue from the taxes farmed, above a minimum which they guaranteed to the King. This was a transition from the system of farming the indirect taxes to that of administering them directly by the government, and the most important, perhaps, of the financial measures of Necker. The State gained thereby on the spot fourteen millions a year.[1] The decree of the council concerning the farms was followed by a declaration (February 13), announcing that the villain-tax, the capitation-tax, and the accessories to the villain-tax, could be increased thenceforth only by laws registered in the superior courts. The King reserved the right of examining whether these taxes were justly apportioned among the generalities, and announced a similar investigation with respect to the salt-tax, the customs, and the aids.

Necker, in truth, before dictating to the King the promise not to increase the direct taxes in future, without the forms of law, had himself increased them five or six millions by the same measures as those of his predecessors. He also prolonged the first twentieth for ten years (February, 1780), together with the eight sous per livre on all the duties, and the portion of the *octrois* collected in behalf of the treasury, and procured ten millions by authorizing the hospitals to make sales of real estate; the proceeds of which were to be paid into the treasury in exchange for titles of *rentes*, to be increased one-tenth every twenty-five years in order to compensate for the depreciation of the precious metals. He lastly obtained thirty millions from the assembly of the clergy, sixteen millions as a gratuitous offering, and fourteen as a loan, redeemable in fourteen years from the revenue of the farms (June, 1780).

[1] Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 282.

Digitized by Google

A decree of the council, which also promised considerable resources, was that which prescribed the revision of the pledged domains. In accordance with the principle of the inviolability of the royal domain, the government had a right, at each change of reign, to retract all the grants that had been made. Necker, January 14, 1781, enjoined on the holders of these, whether by favor or for a pecuniary consideration, to present the titles and the statement of their possessions in the course of the year, in order that the administration of the domains might fix the rent, or the supplementary rent which would be imposed on them, unless they preferred the redemption of their claims. The greater part of the alienations had been gratuitous, or nearly gratuitous favors, bestowed on princes, courtiers, and men in credit.

The ministry of Necker was signalized, apart from purely financial questions, by a number of measures, as well social and economic as philanthropic, proceeding directly or indirectly from the influence of this statesman: for instance, in industrial matters, the prohibition to export looms, tools, and instruments used in manufactures (March 3, 1779), a prohibition emanating from the *protective* system; and the regulation on manufactures (May 5, 1779), an attempt at a mixed system between regulation and free competition. The industrial code, "become, by its complication and its antiquity, difficult of execution," was abandoned: each manufacturing town was requested to present to the council new plans of regulations "adapted to the present time." The *regulated* fabrics were to have private marks. Outside the regulations, the manufacturers were to have full liberty to make new or different fabrics, with no other interdiction than that of affixing the marks thereto which were the official guarantee of good manufacture. In a different order of things must be cited the abolition of the penalty of death for horse-stealing, in use in the local laws of Flanders (July, 1778); and especially the celebrated edict of August, 1779, decreeing the abolition of mortmain, and of personal servitude in the domains of the King. This was still only a partial victory of the rights of nature and humanity. Louis XVI., disputed between his good feelings and his prejudices, feared "injuring the laws of property," should he free, by an authoritative stroke, the serfs of the seigniors at the same time with his own. A considerable number of Frenchmen remained for some time longer chained to the feudal glebe, and even deprived of the right of marrying at their pleasure, and transmitting to their

Digitized by Google

children the fruit of their labors.[1] The manes of Voltaire had not the consolation of witnessing the enfranchisement of those serfs of the Jura for whom the patriarch of Ferney had eloquently pleaded against the tyranny of the chapter of Saint-Claude. The seignior-monks refused to participate in the beneficence of the King unless indemnified. Louis dared deprive the seigniors only of the right of *suite*, by virtue of which the *body* serfs who had escaped from the glebe were *pursued* and seized on free soil, with their goods and *acquêts*, by the seignior. The tribunals had encouraged the weak monarch by their example: they hesitated to acknowledge this *excessive right*. disputed, as early as the Middle Ages, by the princes, the founders of *free cities*.

A declaration of August 24, 1780, which made no less noise, at length satisfied the energetic demands of philosophy. The *preparatory question*, inflicted on the accused to wring from him a confession of guilt, was abolished in France, too late for the honor of our government, since it had already ceased in several States greatly inferior to France in civilization. The *preliminary question*, to which the condemned was subjected to force him to reveal his accomplices, was maintained until 1788; and, moreover, the declaration of May 1, 1788, which abolished it, was definitively executed only by a law of the CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (October 9, 1789). A few days after the abolition of the *preparatory question* (August 30, 1780), a declaration concerning the prison system prescribed the separation of the accused, the condemned, and the prisoners for debt, and promised the abolition of all subterranean dungeons, — those sad monuments of the cruelty of past times.

The formation of a commission to examine the petitions for the suppression and the union or transfer of titles of benefices and ecclesiastical property indicates that the clergy continued to lose ground (March 10, 1780).[2]

Necker greatly agitated the public mind and raised up warm controversies by resuming a shred of the plan of Turgot. We have already described the vast organization projected by Turgot, and which was to set out from the commune to reach a kind of national consultative assembly. Necker threw aside the base and the sum-

[1] The *tenement* serf could leave his property to his children only if they formed a common household: if the child had quitted the paternal roof, the seignior became the inheritor.

[2] Concerning all these measures, see *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. and XXVI., *passim*, of the dates indicated. — Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II.

Digitized by Google

mit of this work, and appropriated the intermediate part while perverting its nature. A decree of the council, July 12, 1778, prescribed the formation, in the province of Berry, of an assembly composed of twelve ecclesiastics, twelve landed proprietors of noble birth, and twenty-four members of the Third Estate, twelve of whom were to be deputies from the towns, and twelve land-owners from the rural districts, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Bourges, "for the purpose of apportioning and levying the (direct) taxes in the province, and superintending the making of highways, and the foundation of work-shops for the poor, as well as all other objects which the King might see fit to intrust to the said assembly." The assembly was to hold a session of a month or more every two years; the suffrages were to be counted by poll, and not by order;[1] and the King was to communicate his wishes to it by one or two commissioners. In the interval of the sessions, a bureau of administration was to superintend all the details relative to the apportionment and levy of the taxes, etc., in conformity with the deliberations of the assembly, to which it was to be accountable. The assembly or its bureau could prescribe no expenditure without the King's permission. The King was to permit the assembly and the bureau to make to him such remonstrances and propositions as they believed just and useful, without thereby subjecting the apportionment and recovery of the taxes established, or to be established, to any obstacle or delay. The intendant of the province could take cognizance of the deliberations of the assembly and the bureau whenever he deemed proper. The definitive manner of proceeding in the election of the assembly was to be regulated subsequently: for the first time, the King was to appoint sixteen persons, who were to propose thirty-two others for his Majesty's approbation.[2]

By the definitive regulation, the number of members was modified: the clergy formed only one-fifth, instead of one-fourth; and it was decreed that the assembly should be partially reorganized according to its own choice, subject to the approval of the King.

We see how far distant these assemblies, founded on the distinction between the three orders, were from the *municipalities* of Turgot, in which the members would have figured only by the title of citizen land-owners.

It was Necker's intention to apply successively to all France the

[1] This was already the *double representation of the Third Estate*, which was to reappear on a more solemn occasion in 1789.

[2] *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXV. p. 354.

Digitized by Google

experiment attempted in Berry, and to transfer the administration of the taxes and the local interests from the hands of the intendants and their sub-delegates to the more or less direct representatives of the tax-payers. The innovation, lame and incomplete as it was, was generally well received. Men saw with joy the weakening of the régime of intendants, — that great machine of universal despotism and subjugation.

The assembly of Berry rendered some service: it obtained the substitution, for the *corvée*, of an increase in the villain-tax and the capitation-tax. This was not so good as the measure of Turgot: it was not equality of taxation; but it was better than the *corvée*. The generalities of Grenoble, Montauban, and Moulins, also solicited and obtained provincial assemblies (April 27, July 11, 1779; March 19, 1780). Another generality, apparently through the organ of the very persons designated by the government, refused the provincial assembly which was offered it; because this purely consultative assembly derogated from the right of the citizens to vote the taxes. It is said that in some provinces, on the contrary, the notables chosen by the government declared, that, if any disturbance to public order resulted from the concessions granted by the King, these concessions would be revoked.[1] This timidity was very exceptional in the spirit of the times.

The institution of provincial assemblies could not precisely *disturb public order*, but might cause embarrassments and dissensions if the general assembly of Turgot were not adopted. It was certain that the provincial administrations, not being brought face to face with each other in a great assembly, would weary the government with their complaints, each with the aim of relieving its constituents at the expense of the neighboring provinces; and that the King would not know to which to listen.

During the closing months of 1780, embarrassments far more imminent crowded upon Necker. His happy vein with respect to loans seemed exhausted. He had obtained during the whole year but twenty-one millions, and even this through the medium and by the guarantee of the *pays d'États;* and saw himself compelled to borrow one hundred and fifty-five millions of the receipts of the ensuing eight years, the worst of all kinds of loans.[2] Public opinion wavered, and credit was exhausted. Necker re-

[1] Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, pp. 252, 253.

[2] The expenditures for 1780 amounted to 651,848,000 fr. — Bailli, *Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 233.

Digitized by Google

gained the one and revived the other by a great stroke. He demonstrated to the King that confidence and publicity were inseparable; and that, as soon as loans were made the principal resource, it became necessary to reveal, or at least partly to unfold to the eyes of the public, that *secret of the finances* hitherto concealed with such jealous care in the portfolios of the comptroller-generalship.[1] In short, he obtained from Louis XVI. permission to publish the celebrated *Official Report of the Finances* (January, 1781).

The effect was prodigious. The nation, which had hitherto been alike ignorant "of the amount of subsidies which it furnished to the crown, the relation of the expenditures to the annual receipts of the treasury, and the sum of the extraordinary engagements contracted by the State,"[2] — the nation saluted with a cry of rejoicing the appearance of this light in the fiscal darkness. It felt itself progressing through publicity to liberty. It applauded the moral and philanthropic views displayed by the author of the *Official Report*, with some ostentation, but with sincerity. It accepted with entire faith all the figures and results, — the promised extinction of a great part of the pensions, that of the life-*rentes;* the new plans of economy announced; the project of transforming the salt-taxes, so monstrously unequal, into a uniform tax on salt; and of abolishing the internal customs.[3] It ratified the praises which Necker did not spare himself, by marvelling that the receipts had reached the point of exceeding the ordinary expenditures eighteen millions.[4] The very abuses acknowledged by the *Official Report;* the twenty-eight millions expended in pensions, — a sum double that employed for the same purpose by all the kings of Europe together; the inequality of the burdens among the provinces; and the exorbitance of certain superfluous expenses, — redoubled the public confidence. Since the government did not fear to open such irregularities to the public gaze, it was resolved to correct them.

[1] Even this was not all. Bailli shows clearly indeed, in his *Hist. financière* (t. II. p. 235), that the comptrollers-general themselves were very imperfectly acquainted with the real state of the receipts and payments each year, the *exact statements* not being attained until several years had expired.

[2] Bailli, t. II. p. 234.

[3] Necker attacked by sound arguments the economic system of a single tax on real estate, and eulogized indirect taxes, as being those the least felt by the consumer; an argument often since repeated.

[4] And even more than twenty-seven millions, counting seventeen millions of reimbursements from the ordinary receipts. — *Compte rendu*, p. 13.

Digitized by Google

Credit was fully retrieved; every purse was opened, and in a few months, a few weeks, Necker obtained loans to the amount of two hundred and thirty-six millions, — almost as much as he had realized during the preceding four years.

It was the apogee of his fortune. The apogee was not far from the decline.

The *Official Report*, it must be acknowledged, was by no means what it was believed to be by those little familiar with financial questions; that is, almost every one. It was by no means the exact exposition of the aggregate receipts and expenditures, the active and passive forces, of the State. In the first place, the extraordinary charges of the war and the financial arrangements for the service of the armies were not indicated therein; an omission which may be excused by very plausible reasons. Neither was there any thing concerning the floating debt, or the arrears due. Secondly, the detailed statement of the finances did not comprise the total revenue, amounting to about four hundred and thirty millions, but only the two hundred and sixty-four millions paid into and disbursed by the treasury; the remaining one hundred and sixty-six millions being paid into different funds, the operations of which were imperfectly known to the minister himself. This was not Necker's fault: he had, on the contrary, as we have shown, taken the necessary measures to change this state of things, and these measures were in process of execution. Thirdly, with respect to the part of the taxes paid directly into the treasury, the *Official Report* did not even offer the special balance-sheet for the year 1781, which was just opening. It only gave a kind of abstract average of the ordinary receipts and expenditures, applicable to no year in particular, omitting the circumstances peculiar to the current receipts and expenditures: for instance, from one hundred and nineteen millions paid into the treasury by the receivers-general in ordinary years, Necker did not deduct eleven millions, which, in 1781, did not reach the treasury, but were applied to extraordinary expenses. In like manner, he did not deduct certain funds consumed in advance, and not received this year. His statement of the excess of the receipts over the expenditures was therefore purely fictitious, and related only to a normal state which could not return, and which did not, indeed, return by the act of others. "In short, the *Official Report* was a very ingenious work, which appeared to prove much, and which proved nothing."[1]

[1] Droz, *Hist. de Louis XVI.*, t. I. p. 297.

Digitized by Google

It was not, however, the inaccuracies or illusions of the *Official Report* that destroyed Necker, but the truths contained in this work, and the useful reforms announced by it.

At the beginning, Necker had had against him only the clergy and the economists. Since that time, in proportion as he made a conquest of that *public opinion*, that disinterested opinion to which he unceasingly appealed, he had made at each step a new class of enemies,— the great administrative families, the Council of State, by the suppression of the offices of intendants of finance and of commerce, and by those provincial administrations which threatened the despotism of the intendants of the provinces; the financiers, by the reformation of the farms, the abolition of a host of financial offices, and the preference given to the bankers over the old revenue-farmers; the great officers of the crown, by the abolition of all those subaltern sinecures which were within their jurisdiction, and in which they trafficked; a multitude of other great nobles, by the threat suspended over the pensions, the reclamation of the royal domains which had been alienated by favor, and the project of abolishing the tolls on the highways and rivers; the other ministers, Castries and Ségur excepted, by jealousy, personal rivalry, or attachment to the ancient institutions which he overthrew; the brothers of the King, because he did not open the public funds unreservedly to their cupidity or prodigality, and because he did not submit to the domineering selfishness of the one, and the caprices of the other. The league which had overthrown Turgot was formed anew against his rival, but was less complete. The Queen no longer belonged to it, and the Queen was now a power; and the intimate friends of the Queen, treated with consideration by the director of finance, sustained him against the rest of the court.[1] The hostility of the clergy was neither very violent nor unanimous: not only was Necker supported by the political and philosophical prelates, but the aged Beaumont, so fierce against the Jansenists and the infidels, had suffered himself to be gained over by this Protestant philanthropist and his charitable wife; and a motive equally honorable on both sides, zeal for beneficent institutions, had produced friendly relations between the director of finance and the archbishop, which

[1] "The malversations of the great nobles who are at the head of the expenses of the King's household are enormous and revolting. Necker has in his favor the degradation in which the great nobles have fallen; which is such, assuredly, that they are not to be dreaded, and that their opinion does not deserve to be taken into consideration in any political speculation." — *Mém. de Besenval.* This was the opinion of the circle of the Queen, expressed by a member of this circle, which was severe only towards the abuses by which others profited.

Digitized by Google

greatly astonished Paris. As to the parliaments, they had ceased to be friendly since Necker had manifested the design of reëstablishing equality, that is, equity, in the collection of the twentieths;[1] and since they had been able to foresee in him an adversary to privileges, although very timid in comparison with Turgot.

The autumn of 1780 had seen war seriously declared between Necker and Maurepas, whose malignant frivolity knew how to be persevering when the defence of his position was in question. Necker, at first, had the advantage. The *Official Report* marked the limit of his success. The King, assailed with a shower of remonstrances, criticisms, and pamphlets, which found access to him in all forms, began to be dismayed at what he had suffered to be done, and asked himself whether he were not really drifting towards the ruin of the monarchy by revealing the *secret of the finances*, and encroaching on the administrative system of Richelieu and Louis XIV. Vergennes seconded Maurepas' epigrams by heavy *Memorials to the King*, which expressed the quintessence of absolutism, and manifested the illusions which still lulled the men of the past. In these he strove to demonstrate the danger of leaving "the most delicate branch of the administration of the kingdom in the hands of a foreigner, a republican, and a Protestant. There is no longer either clergy, nobility, or Third Estate, in France: the distinction is fictitious, and without real authority. *The monarch speaks: all are the people, and all obey.* M. Necker does not appear satisfied with this happy condition. He has entered into a struggle between the régime of France and the régime of M. Necker." Vergennes concluded very adroitly by representing to the King as a grave offence the pretension set forth by Necker of founding credit on the morality of the minister of finance, and not on the royal word.[2]

During the interval, another *memorial*, in an opposite direction, that which Necker had presented to the King in 1778 to persuade him to establish the provincial administrations, was printed clandestinely by Maurepas. The spirit of this document showed that the fears of Vergennes concerning Necker's pretended *republicanism* were very chimerical; but, at the same time, the

[1] The parliament of Rouen had resisted the modifications of the twentieths with an obstinacy which had been even carried to resignation in a body; an act so harshly prohibited in the edict reëstablishing the parliaments. This resignation, however, resulted in nothing. — See *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, by Floquet, t. VII. p. 63. The parliament of Grenoble had also made much noise.

[2] See the memorials in Soulavie, *règne de Louis XVI.*, t. IV. pp. 149, 206.

Digitized by Google

ideas and expressions of the director of finance were of a nature to exasperate his adversaries, and to rouse the part of the magistracy that still hesitated. On the one hand, he uttered maxims of absolutism like Vergennes, but of absolutism employed in the service of progress. "It is the power of *enforcing*," he said, "which essentially constitutes sovereign greatness;" thus erecting into a principle that royal arbitrary power which had always been contested in law, although submitted to in fact. On the other hand, after stigmatizing the *confused*, *oppressive*, *almost ridiculous*, régime of intendants, he attacked the parliaments, "like all bodies that wish to acquire power by speaking in the name of the people. . . . Although they are strong neither in instruction, nor in the love of the good of the State, they will always show themselves on every occasion, so long as they believe themselves supported by public opinion. It is necessary to deprive them of this support. . . . It is necessary to remove the great objects of administration from the continual scrutiny of the magistracy . . . by an institution, which, while answering the national wishes, equally suits the government (the provincial assemblies)." [1]

It may be judged what a tempest was raised in the parliament by this revelation, due to an abuse of confidence. The impetuous D'Éprémesnil broke forth in furious declamations, and graver magistrates proposed to issue a writ, for treason to the laws of the State, against the magistrate who conspired the abolition of parliamentary registration. "Louis XVI. was forced to tell the first president that a memorial designed for the King alone could not be the object of the inquiries of the parliament. This body indemnified itself by refusing to register the edict creating a provincial assembly (that of Moulins), and by ordering remonstrances to be drawn up against this mode of administration." [2]

Necker, attacked passionately by some, and treacherously by others, took the offensive like a man of courage. In the position in which he was placed, a striking mark of the King's confidence was indispensable to him. His plans were thwarted and mutilated in the royal council in his absence. He requested the right of admission to the council, which implied the rank of min-

[1] See Necker's memorial, ap. Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. IV. p. 121, with the remarks of Louis XVI. The King showed himself therein very hesitating, very timid; inclining strongly to the ancient forms, and less sure than Necker of the absolute right of enforcing his authority. He dared not accept the idea of blotting out the *pays d'États* and their gratuities by the uniform régime of *provincial administrations*.

[2] Droz, t. I. p. 300.

Digitized by Google

ister of State. The King hesitated. Maurepas prevailed, and persuaded him to reply to Necker that he should enter the council if he would abjure the errors of Calvin. Law had done so in a like juncture; but, to a man of Necker's character, such a proposal was an insult. Necker confined himself to demanding that the director of finance should have the inspection of the purchases for the army and navy, and that the edict creating the provincial administration of Bourbonnais should be registered by letters of jussion. He was again refused.[1] He had filled the coffers by his new loans. The expenses of the administration were insured for a whole year. It was thought possible to be ungrateful without peril. Necker did not deem that he could retain his post with honor: May 19, 1781, he tendered his resignation to the King. The Queen sent for him, and vainly strove to shake his resolution. As to Louis XVI., weary of Necker as he had been of Turgot, not only did he receive his resignation with pleasure, but he was exceedingly piqued at the unusual form of the note in which the minister had offered his resignation, written on small-sized paper, *without formal address or title;* and this infraction of etiquette contributed not a little to close the way to Necker's return to power.[2]

Among the middle ranks of the population, and the large minority of the higher classes who seconded the reformatory movement, the fall of Necker was felt as a public calamity. The effect was much greater than at the time of the disgrace of Turgot, who had just died, at the age of fifty-four,[3] happy in not being condemned to see that society, which had been unwilling to be saved by him, swallowed up in blood and tears. Public opinion had developed greatly during five years, and a far greater number of men took an active interest in public affairs: a less evil, therefore, produced a much stronger impression. The attitude of Necker's friends and enemies attested the immense progress made by the middle classes, become the true France. The official world dared not triumph aloud: the clamor of Paris, responded

[1] According to Madame Campan (*Mémoires*, t. I. p. 263), Maurepas committed a forgery on Necker, as lately on Turgot. He perverted a letter from Necker to the King, in such a manner as to render it indecorous in the sight of Louis XVI.

[2] Soulavie, t. IV. p. 217. The note read as follows: "The conversation which I have had with M. de Maurepas no longer permits me to delay placing my resignation in the hands of the King. This is heart-rending to me. I venture to hope that his Majesty will deign to preserve some remembrance of the years of happy but painful labor, and, above all, of boundless zeal, which I have devoted to his service."

[3] March 20, 1781.

Digitized by Google

to by the provinces, was too violent. It would not have been prudent to express a feeling of joy in the streets or in public places. With the philosophers and the bourgeoisie, a part of the court flocked to the residence of the fallen minister, — that château of Saint-Ouen where one of the authors of the fall of Necker, the brother of Louis XVI., was, thirty-three years after, to appropriate to himself the principles which he now opposed. The Orleanses, the Condés, and even the aged Richelieu and the Archbishop of Paris, appeared at Saint-Ouen in strange conjunction. Foreign countries joined in the chorus with France. England rejoiced in no longer having to cope with the great finder of millions. Joseph II. and the Czarina testified their high esteem to Necker: it only belonged to himself to administer the finances of Russia. He was unwilling to quit France: he expected that necessity would bring back the King to him, and his confidence in himself persuaded him that he would not have long to wait. This return, however, did not take place till the end of seven years; and, when Louis again endured rather than recalled Necker, it was too late for both.

Had Necker been patient, the King would not, perhaps, have decided to remove him; and Maurepas, who terminated his fatal career a few months after (September 21, 1781), would have left him the place free. It is not probable that Vergennes would have been strong enough to overthrow him. Necker, maintained in the ministry, would have postponed for a little time the catastrophe towards which the government was drifting; but he would have only postponed it: he had neither the character nor the views to prevent it, admitting prevention to have been possible; and, had he had them, the King would have abandoned him like Turgot.

Whatever may be said of his vanity and weaknesses, Necker was one of the very few politicians who have loved power as a means, and not as an end, and who have always identified their personal ambition with the general interest. This suffices for the honor of his memory.[1]

A counsellor of State, Joli de Fleuri, was summoned, despite himself, to the perilous inheritance of Necker. He aspired to the ministry of justice. The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, urged him for the finances, in order to compromise him thereby, and no

[1] Among the plans of improvements which disappeared with him is remarked that of indemnifying the victims of judicial errors, the citizens accused unjustly. — Soulavie, t. IV. p. 184. Necker also knew the sadness of Turgot, — the sadness of the statesman who sees the good of a people wrested from his hands!

Digitized by Google

longer to have to fear his rivalry elsewhere. Maurepas forced him to accept. He took merely the title of councillor of the royal council of finance; did not install himself in the hôtel of the comptroller-generalship; and affected to set himself up as the admirer and continuer of Necker, whom he visited in his popular retirement at Saint-Ouen. This is the strongest possible proof of the power which had been gained by public opinion. Joli de Fleuri secretly thought the reverse of what he manifested openly; but he felt the impossibility of maintaining credit, should he avow himself the adversary of Necker's system.

If the reaction was disguised in the finances, it had just been revealed elsewhere by a stroke of inconceivable madness. A regulation decided upon in spite of the minister of war, M. de Ségur, three days after the fall of Necker (May 22, 1781), decreed that every candidate proposed for the rank of second lieutenant must thenceforth furnish proofs of noble descent for four generations on the father's side, unless he were the son of a knight of St. Louis! All the bourgeoisie in easy circumstances, all the sons of families not of noble birth, but *living like nobles*, — that is, living by their landed estates or by liberal professions, — and even the offspring of grand-parents ennobled within the past century, thus found themselves excluded from the army, unless they began by shouldering the musket like common soldiers; a condition which, according to the mode of the formation of the army, was viewed in quite a different light from what it has been since 1792. In other words, the army was made, after Voltaire and Rousseau, much more feudal than under Louis XIV., and even than at the time of its creation in the fifteenth century. Neither Chevert nor the sons of the ministers of Louis XIV. could have been second lieutenants in 1781;[1] any more, besides, than Bossuet or Massillon could have been bishops: for it was with mitres as with epaulets, although no official regulation was made thereon. The King was determined to make benefices, from the most modest priory to the richest abbey and the episcopal cross, the exclusive appanage of the nobility.[2]

[1] Before, military rank was reputed to be reserved for men of noble birth; but the government contented itself with certificates of compliance, and every man *living like a nobleman* was admitted without difficulty. — See the regulation, ap. *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVII. p. 29. The following year, the minister of the marine, Castries, made a worthy protest against it by causing experienced merchant-captains to be received into the royal navy, according to the plan of Choiseul. — See *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. III. p. 460.

[2] See curious details in the *Mém. de madame Campan*, t. II. p. 236.

Digitized by Google

The monarchy could not have dealt itself a severer blow. It at once exasperated the whole bourgeoisie and a formidable class of the army, the subaltern officers, who felt that they were about to be immured, in point of fact, in their humble condition, although the exception was not abolished by law which rendered them eligible to promotion from the ranks. Bourgeois and sergeants remembered the offence offered to the commonalty when they joined hands at the foot of the Bastille.

On the same day of the appointment of M. de Fleuri to the finances (May 25), the second edition of the *Philosophical History of the Two Indies*, by the Abbé Rainal, an edition bolder than the first, and published under the name of the author, was condemned by the parliament. Rainal was forced to quit France. The Sorbonne had recently wished to attack Buffon on account of his last masterpiece, the *Epochs of Nature;* and the court had been obliged to interfere to cause the illustrious old man to be left in peace. The assembly of the clergy, in 1780, had renewed its complaints against tolerance, and its demands for the persecution of the philosophers and the Protestants, and had solicited of the King a new law for the suppression of the abuse of *the art of writing*.[1] The powers of the past revived their pretensions, at moments, with the passion of rebellious decay, and passed by turns from syncope to paroxysms of anger.

It could soon be seen that the spirit of Necker no longer presided over the finances. Joli de Fleuri created no new provincial assemblies; restricted the existing ones as much as possible; increased all the indirect imposts, salt-taxes, tolls, and duties, two sous per livre: a very unjust proportion; for it caused the greater part of the new charge to fall on those already the most heavily burdened, instead of beginning by reëstablishing equality among private individuals, and among the provinces and communes (August, 1781). "This was administering in the fashion of Terrai," says M. Droz, very truly. A large number of the fiscal

[1] Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. p. 136. The clergy admitted that it was impossible to apply the law of 1757, which decreed the penalty of death against irreligious writers. It demanded penalties *less severe*, but more strictly applied, — fines, exclusion from office and from the privileges of citizens, and perpetual imprisonment for incorrigible offenders; for booksellers, the loss of their license; the abolition or extreme restriction of the peddling of books, and the grant of an inquisitorial inspection of *bad books* to the clergy jointly with the civil authority. We shall speedily recur to what concerned the Protestants. The piety of Louis XVI. was by no means fanatical, and he had the wisdom at least not to enter the path into which the clergy sought to draw him. His notes on the *Remonstrances* are full of good sense.

Digitized by Google

offices suppressed by Necker soon reappeared with the privileges attached to them (October, 1781–January, 1782).

Maurepas died meanwhile (November 21, 1781). The King's regret for the loss of his *old friend* attested his good heart and his lack of intelligence. No one wholly replaced the fatal Mentor of the King; but Vergennes obtained the most important place in the confidence of Louis XVI., who made him chief of the council of finance in the place of Maurepas. Vergennes took another step towards the position of prime minister by inducing the King to establish a committee of finance, composed only of the chief of the council of finance, the keeper of the seals, and the comptroller-general, to which the other ministers were accountable (February, 1783). He went no farther: his ambition had not energy enough to attain the end; and he would not have known what to do with the supreme power had he obtained it.

Fleuri continued to increase the taxes. He established in July, 1782, a third *twentieth*, estimated at twenty-one millions,[1] which was to last three years after peace. The proceeds of the two sous per livre were estimated at thirty millions. He undertook to continue the system of loans simultaneously with the increase of taxes by presenting this augmentation of the revenues as a guarantee to the lenders. He succeeded at first, to a certain point, and borrowed, from his entrance into public affairs to the end of 1781, one hundred and ninety millions, on less favorable conditions, it is true, than his predecessor. The parliament of Paris registered every thing, in its satisfaction at the dismissal of Necker. Joli de Fleuri, sprung from one of the principal parliamentary families, was personally on the best terms with the company, and had accepted the direction of the finances only by the entreaty of the leaders of the parliament. The provincial parliaments showed themselves less docile. That of Franche-Comté placed restrictions on the edict levying two sous per livre, and did not register the third twentieth till the end of the war. The Governor of Franche-Comté, by the King's command, authoritatively enforced the registration. The parliament declared the registration null and void, and forbade the collection of the new taxes under penalty of extortion. The scenes of the times of Louis XV. were repeated. The parliament of Franche-Comté waged a warfare of decrees against the council, resuming the old tactics of separating the King's will from that of the agents of the King. It

[1] Manufactures, and offices and duties, were exempted from this new twentieth.

Digitized by Google

demanded the convocation of the Provincial Estates and that of the States-General. The proposition to send the decree containing this demand to the parliaments, the princes, and the peers, was rejected by a majority of five. The hour had not yet come; but it was approaching. The quarrel ended in a compromise.

Proud Brittany was also beginning to be restive. Her States, in 1782, repeated their energetic protests against the strange injunction to elect, as the deputies charged with watching over their affairs at court, none but men *recommended* by the governor of their province.[1] They resolved to vote no subsidies unless the King consented to receive a deputation commissioned to set forth to him their rights. The King received the deputies, and, instead of listening to them, enjoined on them obedience, declaring that there was nothing in his orders contrary to the privileges which "his predecessors had been pleased to grant to his province of Brittany." The States replied by a letter almost republican: "Our franchises are a contract, and not a privilege. . . . Your Majesty has sworn to observe our laws and our constitution. . . . The conditions which insure our obedience to you are positive laws."

The nobility sustained this haughty language with more vigor than the other two orders, which did not proceed from an inferiority of energy in the bourgeoisie, but from the undemocratic manner in which the representation of the Third Estate was elected. The nobility opposed any deliberation on the subsidies claimed by the King until the States had recovered their independence. The governor introduced troops into Rennes, in violation of the laws which prohibited the military force from approaching within ten leagues of the city where the States of Brittany were in session. By intrigue, still more than by menace, the Governor and the Bishop of Rennes succeeded at length in gaining over the more needy portion of the nobility. The majority submitted: a hundred gentlemen persisted in their protest.[2]

Every thing was inconsistent in Louis XVI. He was terrified when his ministers proposed to him to change the ancient forms for the purpose of realizing necessary reforms; and, at the same time, he violated the old laws by arbitrary caprices, exactly

[1] The collection of the *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXIV. p. 355, contains a decree of the council annulling a resolution of the States of Brittany because they had appointed, for the orders of the nobility and the Third Estate, other deputies than those recommended by the governor (1776). The second order of the clergy of Brittany (the lower clergy) protested with great energy against another decree, of November 4, 1780, which excluded it from the deputation. — *Mémoires secrets*, t. XVII. p. 27.

[2] Droz, t. I. pp. 386–390.

Digitized by Google

as his grandfather might have done, without knowing how to be decidedly either despotic, reformatory, or conservative.

Symptoms of agitation appeared in the most unlike conditions. In Provence and Dauphiny, it was the lower clergy that were restless. The poor curés with slender stipends assembled to frame their complaints, and to appoint syndics and deputies. Those of the diocese of Vienne "caused memorials to be printed, contrary to the respect due to the bishops, their superiors," said the royal declaration which prohibited their assemblage (March 9, 1782).

The war, meanwhile, had ended, very opportunely for the minister of finance, who felt the resource of loans failing, and confidence becoming withdrawn from him in proportion as the public discerned more clearly that he was really hostile to reforms. Joli de Fleuri wished, nevertheless, to economize after his fashion. In accordance with Vergennes and the keeper of the seals, who composed, in conjunction with him, the new committee of finance, be caused the treasury to be authorized, by decree of the council, to suspend the payment of letters of exchange coming from the colonies. This was violating public faith towards those colonists who had contributed so much to the success of the war, and mistaking bankruptcy for economy. The minister of the marine was indignant that his name should have been put to such a measure without consulting him. Joli de Fleuri recriminated concerning the expenses of the marine, as Necker had lately done against Sartine, and talked of *malversation*. The proud and upright Castries was not, however, a Sartine: he gave Fleuri such rude thrusts, that Vergennes dared not sustain the latter. Fleuri tendered his resignation; thus escaping, without much regret, the immense embarrassments which he foresaw (March, 1783).

The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, with Vergennes' consent, caused Fleuri to be succeeded by another counsellor of State, D'Ormesson, who accepted the office tremblingly. "Sire, I am very young," said he to the King, on thanking him for so difficult a post. "I am younger than you," replied Louis; "and I fill a greater place than that which I give you."[1]

The misfortune of both was not youth, but incapacity. The laborious probity of D'Ormesson could not make up for lack of strength and breadth of mind. The new comptroller-general struggled against the cupidity of the courtiers, and resisted the King's brothers, who, not content with their enormous appanages, undertook to make the State pay their debts; but he was only

[1] Monthion, *Ministres des finances*, p. 272.

Digitized by Google

fit for passive resistance to evil, where the boldest and most enterprising genius was needed. He soon quarrelled with Vergennes, in consequence of a quarrel between the latter and Miromesnil. Vergennes undermined him with the King, who purchased Rambouillet for fourteen millions from the Duke de Penthièvre, without saying a word concerning it to the minister of finance. Louis, so economical in his private life, was seized in turn with the madness that surrounded him. D'Ormesson wished to respond to this lack of confidence by tendering his resignation. His wife opposed it with tears. He remained, and lost the opportunity of an honorable retreat, to meet, a few days after, a heavy and legitimate fall. His attempts to borrow had failed: not knowing where to find money, he lost his presence of mind, and plunged headlong into arbitrary measures. He annulled the lease of the farms, so well regulated by Necker, without any pretext, and placed the farms under the direct administration of the government. Shortly before, he had compelled the bank of discount, created by Turgot, and preserved and enlarged by Necker, secretly to lend six millions to the treasury. The secret transpired. The holders of the notes flocked in a crowd to the bank. It was unable to redeem them.[1] D'Ormesson authorized it to suspend the specie payment of its notes over three hundred livres for three months, and made the notes a legal tender. The panic spread; money became scarce; and the payment of the arrears of the *rentes* was well-nigh suspended.

It was impossible to retain D'Ormesson. Castries, in an urgent memorial, conjured the King to recall Necker, insisting that Necker alone could make the public accept the taxes after the loans, and that, with any one else, the disorder would evidently go on, from step to step, to a general bankruptcy.[2] The King replied, that, "after the manner in which Necker had quitted him," he could no longer employ the ex-minister. He was addressed in the name of the safety of his State: he answered by a puerile susceptibility of feeling.

Necker set aside, Foulon was called into question; a personage detested by the populace of Paris, who had a terrible fate in store for him.[3] His reputation was such, that this would have been styled the revival of the Terrai ministry. Foulon was not admit-

[1] Its administrators had employed the greater part of its specie in operations foreign to its true design; which was the reason that six millions sufficed to drain it. — See *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 221.

[2] See the memorial in Soulavie, t. IV. p. 274.

[3] Ex-intendant of finance, massacred after the taking of the Bastille.

Digitized by Google

ted. The King also rejected the Archbishop of Toulouse, the ambitious and restless Loménie de Brienne.[1] Louis did not like prelates, especially prelates *who did not believe in God*, as he says himself.

An intrigue conducted by Vergennes, with the coöperation of the friends of the Queen and the Count d'Artois, caused the King to accept a third candidate, the intendant of Valenciennes, one of the most brilliant of men, but certainly the most disreputable man in the administration, — that CALONNE who had signalized himself by such effrontery in the La Chalotais affair, and who had not assuredly since become more moral. To take Calonne, after removing Turgot and Necker, was to act like a sick man in the last extremity who calls in an audacious charlatan after dismissing his physicians (November 2, 1783).[2]

Before summing up this ministry of the death-struggle of the monarchy, we will cast our eyes for a moment on the state of manners and ideas in the last days that preceded the great catastrophe. We have fathomed and analyzed, so far as it depended on us, the moral origin of the new world which commenced in 1789. Our narrative stops on the threshold of this world. It remains for us to point out the last modifications which separated the incubation from the bursting, Voltaire and Rousseau from the Revolution, — modifications, the most important of which consisted in a mystical movement, very unexpected on the morrow of Voltaire and the *Encyclopædia*.

It does not belong to our plan to enter into the anecdotical history of the court of Louis XVI. Events have already sufficiently brought upon the stage this unhappy monarch, capable of

[1] Brienne did not aspire to the title of comptroller-general, which was incompatible with his vocation, but to admission into the council, where he would have kept a firm rule over the finances, through his economic and administrative knowledge.

[2] The contrast between public opinion and the government became more and more manifest. During the ministry of D'Ormesson, a decree of the council, June 24, 1783, had granted new encouragement to the *slave-trade*, and this at the moment when the abolition of slavery was beginning to enter into, not only the vague hopes, but the positive projects, of advanced minds; when La Fayette, in his voyage in 1784, expressed this wish to the Southern United States, and undertook an experiment at his own expense, at Cayenne, for the gradual emancipation of the negroes, with the applause of Washington. "Would to God," wrote this illustrious friend to him, "that a like spirit might animate all the people of this country! . . . I believe that a sudden emancipation would be productive of great evils; but certainly it could and should be gradually accomplished by legislative authority." — Letter of May 10, 1786, ap. *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 157. The wish of Washington, realized elsewhere, is unhappily far from accomplishment in the country of this great man; and America may pay dearly for not having listened to him [written in 1860].

Digitized by Google

comprehending, incapable of willing; incapable of securing to himself the merit of his good intentions, and carrying them into effect; destined to reject or to let go, one after another, every firm hand that was stretched out to save him, and inevitably to turn the people from disappointed expectation to anger, and from confidence to hatred. We have also endeavored to sketch the portrait of that unfortunate Marie-Antoinette, who, ill received upon her arrival in France by the public, to whom she was the pledge of the unpopular Austrian alliance, and successively pursued by the calumnies of the D'Aiguillons and the Du Barris, the secret intrigues of the Count de Provence and the circle of the Count d'Artois,[1] and the passionate rancor of the Duke de Chartres, seemed to make it her task unceasingly to furnish new weapons to this hatred by a mode of life which was nothing but a perpetual imprudence; who saw, without knowing how to defend herself, and almost without being moved by it, her giddiness transformed into crime, and her weakness into infamy, and not only faults sought in all her relations with the other sex, but monstrous vices in her female friendships; who fell, at last, into utter disrepute, and, if not irreproachable, at least less worthy of reproach than most of the ladies of the court, acquired, without deserving it, the reputation deserved by her abominable sister, Caroline of Naples.[2]

The Queen was decried and derided; yet her habits, her tastes, and her follies, were imitated. A dressmaker, admitted to the apartments of Marie-Antoinette, to the great stupefaction of all who retained any veneration for etiquette, Mademoiselle Bertin, became an historic personage. Her influence shook the whole system of our ancient manufactures by completing the revolution commenced by Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barri, and substituting a light, frivolous, and fantastic elegance for the heavy magnificence of the old fabrics. Sometimes the Queen, and, after her, all the fashionable beauties, affected an extreme simplicity, and assumed the simple white dress of their waiting-

[1] We say, *the circle;* for the Count d'Artois himself, capable of speeches which were more than light, was by no means capable of a malignant and treacherous plot.

[2] The nightly promenades on the terrace of Versailles, the nocturnal festivals at Trianon, and the freaks at the Opera ball, do not appear to have concealed the mysteries which malevolence has sought to discover therein. Madame Campan, especially, has justified the Queen in a plausible manner on this point and on others. The *debaucheries* of Marie-Antoinette are imaginary. It does not belong to history to decide concerning the two *attachments* which were attributed to her at a few years' interval. — See, but with reservations, the *Mém. du comte de Tilli.*

Digitized by Google

maids; sometimes they muffled themselves in theatrical costumes and immense plumes, and built up on their heads a gigantic scaffolding of gauze, flowers, and feathers, so that the head of a woman appeared in the middle of her body, as was depicted in the caricatures of the times, and every circle had the air of a burlesque fancy-ball.

The drawing-rooms laughed at the fashion while obeying it: the artisans exclaimed that *the Austrian woman* was ruining our Lyons manufactories, our beautiful silk manufactures, to enrich the manufactories of Brabançon lawn, and the subjects of her brother, Joseph II.[1]

Every one, moreover, artisans, bourgeois, and even courtiers, agreed in clamoring against the intimate circle of the Queen, the Polignacs and their friends, who formed, as it were, a small court within the great one, — the courtiers, because they were jealous of the members of this little favored circle; the other classes, because they fancied that they discovered therein the source of all bad counsels and the point of support of all abuses, — an exaggerated prejudice; for this circle, governed by petty interests and short-sighted passions, did good and harm by turns, without any general views. An incident will show with what gravity it treated politics. One of the members of the circle, the Count d'Adhémar, a very insignificant person, had the misfortune to be tiresome to the Queen. Marie-Antoinette could find no better means of ridding herself of him than to cause him to be sent as ambassador to London.[2]

The majority of the nation was not less hostile to the court than to the friends of the Queen, and to the nobility in general than to the court. The bourgeoisie commented with bitterness upon the statistics of the *Official Report*, the amount of the pensions, the expenses of the court, and the princely appanages, — statistics which had become a condemnation since they had ceased to be a promise of reform; and was still more violently irritated at the too celebrated ordinance on military grades. As to the peasantry, the abolition and almost immediate reëstablishment of the *corvée*, and the idea of abolishing the feudal tributes and

[1] France herself had very flourishing manufactories of lawn in her northern provinces, which declined only by the invasion of cotton cloths.

[2] *Mém. de madame Campan*, t. I. p. 265. It is true that Madame Campan says that the Queen afterwards reproached herself for this frivolity. According to Madame Campan, it was from 1783 that the influence of the Polignacs became wholly injurious, and that they more and more deeply compromised the name of the Queen in intrigues in which she often had the responsibility without the complicity.

Digitized by Google

the salt-tax, thrown out amidst the experiments of Turgot, had carried the agitation into the humblest cottages. The sluggish and heavy masses of the rural districts were restless, in the secret expectation of the speedy appearance of that day of reparation; that day of judgment on the earth, so often invoked in vain by their sires in the mystical insurrections of the Middle Ages, and at last about to dawn. The rural districts were ready to follow as soon as the bourgeoisie should have given the signal.

That absorbing covetousness of the nobility, which excited the anger of the bourgeoisie to so high a degree, was the inevitable result of the work of Richelieu and Louis XIV. To overthrow the seigniorial mode of life, and to attract within the shadow of the throne the great nobles transformed into courtiers, was to burden the State with the support of the petty nobility, formerly maintained in the châteaux by the great nobles; then of the latter themselves, speedily ruined or involved in debt by court life. The misalliances which had *manured* the seigniorial lands with the money of the financiers had only retarded this logical necessity, which implied pensions, pecuniary favors of all kinds, and the exclusive monopoly of military rank and ecclesiastical benefices,[1] if it was wished to preserve an hereditary nobility, often an obstacle, but always an indispensable buttress to royalty. The end of this logic was reached only on the eve of the common fall of the nobility and royalty. In other words, the Third Estate was excluded from every thing at the moment when it felt itself capable of every thing: inequality was carried to the farthest excess, at the moment when equality existed everywhere, without as within, in dress as in mind; when the Queen had effaced the last vestiges of the etiquette of Versailles; "when a duchess could no longer be distinguished from an actress;" when the great nobles, deserting the drawing-rooms of Louis XVI., strolled through Paris in frock-coats and coarse shoes, and suffered themselves to be collared in the crowd by street porters.

Every thing was inconsistent; and the height of inconsistency was personified in an incident, a name,—FIGARO, or the *Day of Folly*.

A day of folly, indeed; the last saturnalia of the ancient régime, in which those who lived by abuses, and who refused to cease to live by them, united in forcing the government to suffer the abuses to be dragged upon the stage; in which those who were sheltered by arbitrary power applauded those who were sapping its founda-

[1] Which impelled the curés, like the sergeants, to revolution.

Digitized by Google

tion; in which the privileged classes amused themselves with the spectacle of the social hierarchy crumbling before the piercing laughter of Panurge transformed into Figaro. Beaumarchais crowned his innumerable adventures by the most daring of all. In this comedy, the work of an inferior Voltaire, who seems to have passed through the literary schools of the Italian and Spanish decline through the *concetti* and *gongorism*, instead of being, like the patriarch of Ferney, the legitimate successor of the literature of the Great Age, Beaumarchais no longer attacked a single body, as in the times of the *Maupeou parliament:* he struck all bodies, all orders, and all institutions; he collected, concentrated, and laughingly cast upon the stage, all that had been sown gravely through so many books. Louis XVI. was not deceived by it. After listening to Beaumarchais' manuscript, "Should this piece be played," he exclaimed, "*it would be necessary to destroy the Bastille!* . . . It shall never be played!"

It was played, notwithstanding! The circle of the Queen, the court almost in a body, headed by the incapable and vicious great nobles, at whom Beaumarchais' sarcasms were directly levelled, the greater part of the men in office and dignities, even to the royal censors, even to the bishops, joined the pressure of their influence to the clamor of Paris. Beaumarchais prevailed over the keeper of the seals, and over the King himself. The *Marriage of Figaro*, played for the first time at the château of Genevilliers, before the Count d'Artois and the circle of the Queen, — who failed to be present only because she was ill, — made its appearance at the Théâtre Français in April, 1784. Beaumarchais himself was astounded at the immensity of a success, the full scope of which his mind, more active than profound, had not measured.[1]

Beaumarchais won a second victory over ancient society by carrying out, and circulating through all France, despite the reiterated complaints of the clergy, the double edition of the complete works of Voltaire, printed at Kehl, in the territory of the Margrave of Baden. Condorcet seconded Beaumarchais in this vast enterprise, which was encouraged by the connivance of Maurepas, then of Calonne, with the same logic through which the court protected *Figaro*. The great work of Beaumarchais, increased by an edition of Rousseau commenced with less noise, filled and even exceeded the interval which separated the death

[1] The Memoirs of Madame Campan and those of Madame Vigée-Lebrun are incorrect as regards Figaro. —See *Beaumarchais et son Temps*, by M. de Loménie.

Digitized by Google

of Voltaire and Rousseau from the Revolution: commenced in 1779, it was not finished till 1790, between the taking of the Bastille and the removal of the remains of Voltaire to the Pantheon.[1]

Thus, at the moment which our narrative has reached, the eighteenth century was summing up and contemplating itself in the works of its initiators before proceeding to action. Literature was no longer called upon to utter new thoughts, but to popularize the thoughts already uttered, and to circulate the testaments of the illustrious dead. The principal contemporaries of Voltaire and Rousseau successively rejoined them in the spheres beyond the grave. Condillac disappeared in 1780; D'Alembert, in 1783; Diderot, in 1784; then Mabli, in 1785. The prophet of Nature, the great Buffon, closed the funeral train of this generation, forever famous (1788). The men of ideas seemed hastening to make way for the men of battle.

Letters, still rich in second-class talent, brought forth, therefore, no more men of genius, save a single exception, — the great writer who at times consoled the last days and who received the inheritance of Jean-Jacques; the faithful disciple who so happily developed that religious poetry of Nature, lost from our literature, and again discovered by Rousseau; that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who succeeded in uniting Greek beauty and Christian purity in pictures of incomparable grace and sublime simplicity, and creating an immortal type of tenderness and modesty in his *Virginia*, the most touching of masterpieces.[2] In short, literature was declining, a thing inevitable; but the fine arts, as we have said elsewhere, were in turn assuming a lofty and heroic character, and the progress of the sciences was accelerated instead of becoming slackened. A magnificent impulse of discovery and creation manifested itself therein. There every void that was made was immediately filled up. D'Alembert, dying, was succeeded by Lagrange, Piedmontese by birth, and French by extraction, who was retained for twenty years at Berlin by the great Frederick;

[1] Loménie, *Beaumarchais et son Temps*.

[2] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the pretended descendant of Eustache de Saint-Pierre, born at Havre in 1737, began to write late in life, like his master Rousseau, and after having been, like him, long and cruelly buffeted by fortune. His travels in the tropical regions opened unknown sources of inspiration to his imagination, and furnished him with those rich colors which were to be abused after him. His *Études de la nature*, in which so many literary beauties and so much elevation of sentiment well redeem a bad system of physics, did not appear until 1784, and *Paul et Virginie* until 1788, — a sweet and melancholy idyl, which so closely preceded great tragedies.

Digitized by Google

then was attracted to France at the instigation of Mirabeau, a genius of another order, who had comprehended the genius of the scholar (1787). Lagrange had long been present at Paris, through his writings and correspondence, before settling there in person. No one, since Descartes and Leibnitz, had done so much to extend the sovereignty of mathematics over the natural sciences, and to direct and render universal the action of that abstract instrument, by which pure reason dictates laws to sensible objects without seeing or touching them.[1] Mathematics continued to progress, although D'Alembert and Lagrange himself had believed at times that the genius of man had reached its farthest limit. French astronomy was in all its lustre: Bailli, Lalande, and Messier were pursuing their labors. Laplace was beginning to manifest that powerful mind which was to immortalize itself in the *Celestial Mechanics*. In other branches of science, Berthollet, Monge, Fourcroi, etc., had already appeared; an imposing group, above which towered one of the great scientific figures of the modern world, the reformer, the regulator, it may be said the creator, of chemistry,—LAVOISIER.

Many secrets had already been purloined from Nature by the chemists: but they still wrought in darkness, without knowing how to distinguish from each other, by their specific characteristics, the varied and subtle elements which surround us; that is, the real elements concealed beneath the four apparent elements of the ancients. Three-fourths of the eighteenth century had been employed in the study of the *gases*.[2] In 1757, the Englishman

[1] From his earliest youth, he had found the elements of his method of variations, a method of calculus independent of all geometrical consideration, according to the terms of Euler. He generalized the principle of the *least action*, and applied it to the solution of all dynamic questions. He made admirable researches concerning the propagation of sound. He gained the prize of the Academy of Sciences for the theory of the *libration of the moon*, and showed therein all the general features of the principles of *virtual velocities* (1764). He gained the prize for the theory of *Jupiter's satellites*, and gave the first mathematical theory therein (1766). It is impossible to point out here his immense labors in mathematics and general astronomy. In 1776, he demonstrated that the variations of the great axes of the solar system can only be periodical; "the most beautiful discovery of physical astronomy, after that of Newton," says the learned Playfair. In 1781, he published *La Mécanique analytique*, in which, by a happy combination of D'Alembert's principle and that of *virtual velocities*, the progress of rational mechanics is made to depend alone on that of the calculus. The great theorist was to render brilliant practical services to the France of the Revolution by his participation in the establishment of the metrical system, the first Normal School, the Polytechnic School, etc.—See *Biographie universelle*, art. LAGRANGE.

[2] Gas, from the German *gast, geist, spirit*. It was Van Helmont that first gave it this name.

Digitized by Google

Black had discovered the elastic non-respirable fluid (carbonic-acid gas) and latent heat (which the thermometer does not indicate). In 1771, another Englishman, the illustrious Priestley, discovered the interchange of the gases between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms. About 1774, the Swede Scheele discovered the composition of atmospheric air, a mixture of three elastic fluids (carbonic acid, azote, and oxygen). The hypothesis of Stahl, the supposed existence of a substance which was the principle of combustibility, and which was believed to quit the metal when it was calcined, and to return to it when it was revivified (*phlogiston*), still tyrannized over science, and prevented the discovery of the link between these beautiful discoveries and many others. Lavoisier, after long, obstinate, and costly experiments, facilitated by the lucrative position of farmer-general, which he had sought only in order to acquire the means of scientific action, and which would one day be imputed to him as a crime, — Lavoisier at length ventured to break the yoke of *phlogiston*, and to affirm that the calcination of metals is only their combination with fixed air (1772). He soon modified this first idea. In 1774, Burger having reduced the oxides of mercury, without charcoal, in impermeable vessels, Lavoisier examined the air obtained in this manner, and found it respirable. Shortly after, Priestley asserted that it was precisely the only respirable part of the atmosphere. Lavoisier immediately concluded that calcination and all the different kinds of combustion are the result of the union of this essentially respirable air with bodies; and that fixed air, in particular, is the result of the union of respirable air with charcoal. Combining this notion with the discoveries of Black and Wilke concerning latent heat, he considered the heat manifested in combustion as evolved from the respirable air, which it had been formerly employed in maintaining in the elastic state. From this double proposition proceeded the new chemical theory (1775–1777), which Lavoisier, directly or indirectly seconded by Cavendish, Monge, Meusnier, Berthollet, Guyton de Morveau, and Laplace, applied to all the modifications of bodies belonging to the different kingdoms, in a word, to all Nature, and which he generalized, after creating it, by finding words as well as things. The obsolete and obscure language of alchemy finally disappeared before a simple, logical, and luminous terminology;[1] and the *Elementary Treatise on Chemistry* (1789) showed that Lavoisier knew how to expound as well as to

[1] *Méthode de nomenclature chimique*, 1787.

Digitized by Google

effect his conquests of the mysteries of Nature. "Chemistry is easy now," said Lagrange: "it is learned like algebra." Of an empirical art Lavoisier had made a mathematical science.

Foreign scholars, after a few efforts to defend the tradition of Stahl, were speedily obliged to recognize the supremacy of the new theory. France is proud of having conquered the sceptre of the science which reveals to us, so far as it is permitted to human analysis, the true principles of the material world, and which introduces man into the eternal laboratory of the hidden Isis. Another discovery, of a less general and less extended nature, but which manifested with extraordinary lustre the progress of physics, acted much more powerfully, meanwhile, on the imagination of the masses, by astonishing their eyes by an unheard-of spectacle. June 5, 1783, the separate States of Vivarais, assembled in the little town of Annonay, received from the brothers Montgolfier, the managers of a paper manufactory,[1] an invitation to witness an experiment in physics. A linen bag lined with paper, thirty-five feet in height, and inflated by an unknown process, rose into the air, ascended more than ten thousand feet, then slowly descended half a league from its starting-point. By reflecting on the ascent of vapors in the atmosphere, and the formation of clouds, the brothers Montgolfier had perceived, that, to raise a colossal machine to the skies, it was only necessary to enclose in a light vessel a fluid of less weight than the atmospheric air, that is, an artificial cloud; and had procured, by means of combustion kept up in the balloon by the aid of a chafing-dish, a gas of half the gravity of air. The marvellous art of causing a body launched from the earth to travel through space was discovered. It was rapidly improved upon. A society of amateurs of physics, at Paris, substituted for the gas of Montgolfier *inflammable air*, of ten times less gravity than atmospheric air; enclosed it in an impermeable covering of oiled silk; and, on a stormy day, launched the new balloon from the Champ de Mars, amidst the applause of an innumerable multitude. The balloon of the Champ de Mars ascended much more rapidly and higher than that of Montgolfier: it mounted above the region of the clouds, and descended at Écouen, four leagues from Paris (August, 1783).

The aerial ship invented, navigators could not be lacking. The audacious genius of the eighteenth century would not draw back

[1] Apropos of this, we may mention that the manufacture of painted paper, which originated in China, was introduced into France about 1780.

Digitized by Google

when it was in question to conquer for man a new empire, and to take possession "of the immense domain of the air."[1]

Joseph de Montgolfier adapted a chafing-dish and a small boat to his machine; and November 21, 1783, the physicist Pilâtre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes trusted themselves to this formidable vehicle, and set out from the Jardin de la Muette (the Bois de Bologne), saluting the crowd, mute with admiration and terror. They passed over all Paris in their aerial craft, and descended voluntarily, by ceasing to keep up the fire, at the Butte-aux-Cailles, south of the great city. A few days after, the physicist Charles successfully repeated the experiment with the balloon filled with inflammable air, a process surer and better fitted for long voyages and great ascents. Ere long, the mechanician Blanchard, surpassing his predecessors in daring, crossed the Channel in a balloon, and landed from Dover on the heights of Calais.[2]

The people did not doubt that the aerial ships would speedily be steered like the ships of the ocean, and that men would travel in full liberty through the atmosphere. There was an inexpressible intoxication, scarcely saddened for a moment by the catastrophe of Pilâtre de Rozier, who, a new Icarus, fell, hurled from the skies to the shore of that channel which Blanchard had crossed.[3] Was there ever a victory that did not cost the sacrifice of some hero? The genius and power of man were destined, therefore, to know no limits! The elements were about to be his docile slaves! A multitude of other marvellous applications of those scientific theories, which were daily growing in magnitude,[4] was foreseen.

[1] *Description des expériences de la machine aérostatique*, etc., by Faujas de Saint-Fond, t. II. p. 2.

[2] He was accompanied by an Englishman, Doctor Jeffries. Each had hung out the flag of his nation. It is related with pride, that, the aeronauts having been forced to throw overboard the ballast and even their clothing to lighten the balloon and keep at a sufficient height, the Englishman threw away his flag: the Frenchman kept his, which floated alone over England.

[3] Pilâtre had attempted to combine the chafing-dish of Montgolfier with the inflammable air of Charles. This was, as the latter said, like placing a chafing-dish on a barrel of powder.

[4] It is surprising that steam navigation was not organized as early as this epoch. In 1775, M. de Jouffroi had invented and manœuvred on the Saone a little boat moved by a steam-engine. — See the report to the Academy of Sciences on steam navigation in 1840. Analogous attempts were also made in Lorraine. — See the *Constitutionnel* of September, 1851. Awakened as minds were to scientific innovations, they did not yet comprehend the scope of this magnificent application of the principle of Papin. The electric telegraph had the same fate. The first attempts at this were made at Geneva, in 1774, by a French physicist, Louis Lesage; but three-fourths of a century elapsed before the new form of electricity discovered by Volta in 1800 furnished a decisive instrument to this marvellous invention. Apropos of Volta, it should be

Digitized by Google

It was thought certain that this increasing power displayed by man would finally be turned upon himself, and would cause the disappearance of his moral and physical ills. To the visions of pride were joined the not less unbounded visions of philanthropy.[1] There would be no more war, no more injustice, no more tyranny! Could generations so enlightened, and so strong in the future, still know the unfortunate or the wicked? Civilized man, after reforming and purifying civilization, would go, like a beneficent god, to dictate to the savages, from his aerial chariot, the laws of science and true order![2]

Golden dreams of a superannuated society which believed itself

mentioned here that Duvernei, of the Academy of Sciences, had made the experiment of the frog as early as 1700, which was repeated by Galvani with so much éclat, and which became *galvanism*. — See *Giornale di Scienze per la Sicilia*, No. 41, cited by Ed. Fournier; *Siècle* of December 21, 1853.

[1] Philanthropy, like science, had bold visions, only because it had brilliant realities. We have already mentioned the Abbe de L'Épée, who restored the unfortunate deaf-mutes to intercourse with their fellows. His successor, Sicard, was about to elevate them from the simple ideas suggested by the senses to general and abstract ideas, and to awaken in them the spiritual man after the material man. In 1784, the brother of the learned physicist, Haüy, founded the institute for blind youth, — other victims rescued, so far as it was in the power of man, from the rigor of Nature. Meanwhile the excellent and indefatigable Parmentier employed his life in seeking means to prevent famine and to increase the articles of food. The potato, brought from Peru as early as the sixteenth century, and cultivated in Italy and the south of France, was considered as a root fit for domestic animals alone. Turgot had introduced it into Limousin and Auvergne. Parmentier demonstrated that it was adapted to the nutriment of man, and made attempts to cultivate it on a large scale, on the plains of Sablon and Grenelle, with the coöperation of the King, who wore in his button-hole potato blossoms presented to him by Parmentier; and this root of the New World, without equalling our cereals in quality, became a supplement to them of immense utility (1773–1784). Parmentier likewise propagated the cultivation of an excellent American cereal, maize; and strove to improve the manufacture of bread.

[2] The same sentiment, in a more practical and less ambitious form, had inspired the Englishman Cook, the victim of the savages to whom he offered the blessings of civilization; and had dictated the instructions given by the director of the marine, Fleurieu, and by Louis XVI. in person, to the unfortunate La Peyrouse, commissioned to make a great voyage of circumnavigation, with two frigates, for an end at once political, commercial, philanthropic, and scientific (1785). The recommendations to La Peyrouse to seek every means of ameliorating the condition of the savages, and to avoid having recourse to force against them unless absolutely necessary, are very touching. "His Majesty," it is said, "would regard it as one of the most happy successes of the expedition, could it be accomplished without the cost of a single life." — See Lacretelle, *Hist. de France pendant le XVIII. siècle*, t. VI. p. 75. This humane wish was not granted. After three years of labors and discoveries purchased with cruel losses, La Peyrouse and his two vessels disappeared among the archipelagoes of Oceanica. After useless researches for many years, a few relics of the shipwreck which had swallowed up so many precious lives were finally discovered on the reefs of Vanikoro. P. Margry has collected the materials for a Life of La Peyrouse, which will present great interest.

Digitized by Google

plunged in the Fountain of Youth! Alas! the new birth costs more dearly: we are born again only by passing through the anguish of death.

The society of the eighteenth century ascribed to itself an easier destiny: while celebrating Rousseau, it cast far from it his harsh predictions and the threatening prophecies of a few meditative minds. Some associated the joys promised by the present life, so embellished, with the expectation of a future life; others filled the earth with so many hopes, that it seemed to them to suffice for the human race. The enthusiasm of humanity and perfectibility was personified in a man, who, in some sort, closed the philosophic era of the eighteenth century, and who was soon to cast its last and solemn words to the winds of the revolutionary tempests which were ready to swallow it up. This was Condorcet, a *volcano covered with snow*, as one of his contemporaries calls him; the affectionate disciple of Turgot, and the inheritor of his sentiments without their religious idealism and moral austerity; a mind, a cross between Turgot and Voltaire; the successor of Fontenelle in the *Academic Eulogies*, "those funeral orations which philosophy had purloined from the Church,"[1] and in which the scholars replaced the saints, but very far from thinking like Fontenelle concerning *dangerous truths*, and resolved to let them escape from his hand only at the cost of life; the steadfast champion of civil, political, and economical liberty, and of individual liberty, the basis of all liberty;[2] one of the heralds of the crusade against negro slavery,[3] a crusade which assumed increasing proportions as '89 approached; too much inclined to confound the moral and social world with the physical world ruled by mathematical laws, and to attempt to apply to the variable and passion-

[1] J. Reynaud, *Encyclop. nouv.*, art. CONDORCET.

[2] In his work on the *Influence of the American Revolution upon Europe*, he condemned the maxim, too widely spread in the ancient and modern republics, that the minority may be legitimately sacrificed to the majority. — *Mélanges économiques*, t. II. p. 545, Guillaumin. At the same time, the partisan of political unity, he published, in 1781, a refutation of Delolme, and a criticisim on the English Constitution. Like Franklin and Turgot, who went too far, much too far, — who confounded the legislative and the executive powers, he opposed the system of two houses, and was destined afterwards to apply to the republic that principle of unity which Turgot and D'Argenson applied to the monarchy. Unitary in every thing, after noble and sterile efforts to prevent the fatal division of the Jacobins and the Girondins, he will be confounded by blind passion with the party accused of federalism, only through having courageously reproved the violation of the National Convention on the 31st of May, and having protested against the Constitution of 1793, as opening the door to federalism.

[3] *Réflexions sur l'esclavage des nègres*, 1781.

Digitized by Google

ate movements of the one the exact and fixed rules of the other:[1] containing in himself almost all that there would be vigorous and original, and in part erroneous, in Saint-Simon, and in the different schools of the nineteenth century; which would seek perfectibility, above all, in the progress of the physical sciences and the advent of an industrial era; dreaming, lastly, — he, the pupil of experimental philosophy, the child of Voltaire! — of the immortality of the body in default of that of the soul, and thus disguising under an obscure and fantastic form the indestructible sentiment of the infinite, he was to give his final conclusion only in a sketch traced in the depth of an outlaw's retreat,[2] a stone's throw from the scaffold; the monument of a faith in humanity which the loss of the sweet illusions of 1783 had been unable to shake; a hymn to the indefinite perfectibility of man, written while awaiting death; a work of a moral greatness which is the more astonishing, inasmuch as it was not sustained by the true religious ideal, — the ideal of perfectibility beyond the grave; a greatness which could no longer even be comprehended in epochs of indifference, and debasement of soul!

The testament of Condorcet will be found in this maxim, which expressed in advance all the legitimate aspirations of modern *socialism*: —

"All social institutions should have for their end the amelioration, in a physical, moral, and intellectual point of view, of the most numerous and the poorest classes."[3]

From Condorcet to the mystics, from the school of Ferney to cabalistic incantations, who could believe the transition natural? It was found in the idea which Condorcet disclosed at the end of the career open to perfectibility; in the dream of escaping physical death, the final limit where materialism ends, and renounces its action, and which leads the mind of man into the midst of an extra-scientific, extra-philosophical order. The age of Voltaire, in its decline, stretched out its hand to the occult sciences of the Middle Ages.

[1] We are not, however, absolutely to reject the attempts of mathematicians in this respect. It is impossible to arrive at certainty in this path; but the chances of probability to which moral facts, taken as a social whole, may be reduced, may be calculated with profit.

[2] *Esquisse d'un Tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*, written in 1793, and published in 1795, by order of the National Convention.

[3] *Rapport à la Convention nationale sur l'Instruction publique.* Concerning Condorcet, see his *Biographie*, by M. Arago, 1849, and the article of J. Reynaud, *Encyclop. nouvelle.*

Digitized by Google

Rousseau had effected a great and glorious reaction, in the name of sentiment, against that mutilated rationalism which had been made the servant of sensation; but the limits within which Rousseau had the wisdom to confine his action, in order to render its effect more sure, had already ceased to satisfy the heart, and, above all, the imagination. He had interdicted the mysteries which surround men on all sides: they were beginning again to seek to fathom them, with tendencies and in directions very different. Those even, at least many of those, who denied or doubted the simplest and most universal principles of religious philosophy, set about seeking, or rather inventing, the occult causes of things, the physical secret of life, like the adepts of ancient alchemy; and abdicated the experimental method, as well as rationalism, while remaining sensualists. Others, affecting strange and obscure formulas and practices, aspired only to create for themselves a political and social element adapted to excite the public strongly by the attraction of the unknown. Other minds, lastly, aimed higher in their sublime temerity; wished to re-create the *spiritual* man, the principle of the social or external man; and undertook not only to bring back man to his true principle, God, but to cause him to find God in his heart as the immanent and perpetually active cause of his being; to explain the world by man, and no longer man by the world; and to reopen in this life the communication with the higher spheres, which *seers* had been believed to possess in all ages and countries.

The secret societies were naturally the receptacle of all this ferment of ideas and ardent aspirations. From 1770, or a little before, Freemasonry, already very widely spread, assumed an immense growth, and tended to change in character. At first the simple instrument of tolerance, humanity, and fraternity, acting in a general and somewhat vague manner on the sentiments of its adepts and of the society which they influenced,[1] it tended to become an instrument of agitation and action, a direct organ of transformation. The three kinds of mysticism which we have just pointed out wrought upon and penetrated it simultaneously, — the mysticism which may be styled sensualistic; the political mysticism, which was mystical only in appearance; and the theosophic or true mysticism.

[1] The governments that sought to pass for enlightened at first favored Freemasonry, like the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is known that Frederick the Great was a Freemason. Strange to say, the Emperor Francis I., the husband of Maria Theresa, was one also.

Digitized by Google

From 1778, a German physician profoundly stirred Paris by announcing the cure of all diseases by the virtue of a universal agent which he had discovered, and which he directed at his pleasure. All beings, Mesmer affirmed, are plunged into an ocean of fluid, by the medium of which they act upon each other. Man can concentrate this fluid, and direct the currents upon his fellows, either by immediate contact, or from a distance, by the direction of the finger or of any *conductor* whatsoever. These currents carry health and life with them into the bodies, the functions of which are disordered. They cure nervous diseases directly, and all other diseases indirectly. Through its analogy to magnetic attraction or mineral magnetism, Mesmer styled this influence *animal magnetism*. Certain prodigies of ancient systems of religion, miraculous cures by the imposition of hands, trances of a multitude of people, and other extraordiary phenomena wrought by men upon other men, were, according to the audacious innovator, nought but *magnetic* phenomena.

The impression produced by Mesmer was immense. The women, the youth, all minds enamoured with what was unknown, and captivated by the boundless hopes which were the characteristic of the times, were carried away with it.[1] Many thinkers were glad at last to see some other explanation given of the mysterious facts of history than the hackneyed charge of imposture against all thaumaturgists, and founders of religious systems. As to the masses, they rushed to Mesmer's *tub* with an eagerness far more general than that with which they had formerly flocked to the grave of the Deacon Pâris. We shall not recount those fantastic but well-known incidents in which the convulsions of Saint-Médard were well-nigh renewed under a less violent and gloomy aspect, or the obstinate disputes of Mesmer and his disciples with the scientific bodies; disputes which ended in the celebrated report made by Bailli, in the name of a commission appointed from the Faculty of Medicine and the Academy of Sciences (1784). Science, by the voice of Bailli, rejected as arbitrary the hypothesis of the magnetic fluid, and consequently the power of directing this fluid, which Mesmer and his disciples ascribed to themselves; and, without absolutely denying the phenomena pointed out, attributed them exclusively to a moral cause, — *the power of the imagination*. To deny

[1] The correspondence of La Fayette with Washington preserves very curious traces of this enthusiasm. — *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 93. The youthful defender of American liberty was wholly subjugated by Mesmer.

Digitized by Google

these phenomena, indeed, involved historical difficulties far graver than their admission within certain limits; but it is very doubtful whether the explanation of Bailli was sufficient, although there is reason to believe that the unknown cause which acted so powerfully upon the nervous system of man was in a far greater degree moral than physical.

The developments which mesmerism received, and which altogether transformed its character, proceeded in the direction which we have just indicated. Natural somnambulism, and its astonishing effects, explained in past times by superhuman causes, either beneficent or malevolent, was obscurely understood. The eighteenth century had neglected these strange facts. Suddenly an artificial somnambulism was produced. The brothers Puy-Ségur, the disciples of Mesmer, induced upon the sick, by the exercise of magnetic action, whatever might be its nature, instead of the nervous crises of Mesmer's *tub*, an abnormal sleep; during which the somnambulist had the power of looking within his own body, or that of the person with whom he was placed in magnetic connection, and at times, even, it was claimed, of exceeding all the limits assigned to the action and scope of our senses, and of extending far into space, and even into time, a vision which was no longer that of the body; that is, of recovering the *second-sight* of the seers and sibyls. Here the materialism still contained in the theory of Mesmer finally disappeared, and men floated in pure mysticism. The interpretation of the historical traditions by *magnetism* completed and embraced all the mysteries of antiquity. The fascination redoubled together with the opposition: the materialists were exasperated at so sudden and unexpected a reaction; the scholars were terrified and indignant at seeing the ancient world of the occult sciences suddenly reappear, and defy experimental philosophy and prudential methods, the parents of so much progress. Spiritualistic philosophy itself had reason to be troubled at such a tendency in the public mind, so full of peril and delusion. This tendency, however, it must be said, was superficial in the greater number. The genius of the eighteenth century speedily recovered from the kind of surprise which it had experienced, and turned this effervescent ardor again to politics: nevertheless, magnetism and somnambulism continued at intervals to excite a lively interest, and to manifest facts outside of the ordinary laws of physics, although these facts did not become sufficiently established to enter the domain of science. The problem remained a problem.

Digitized by Google

The mystical movement had attained its highest degree elsewhere than in magnetism. Secret adepts of doctrines emanating from the Cabala, or mystical philosophy of the Jews, and from the Alexandrine and Gnostic Neo-Platonism revived by the Renaissance, had always continued here and there since the sixteenth century. A singular personage, Martinez Pasqualis, a Portuguese Jew, as it is believed, introduced into a number of the French Masonic lodges, from 1754 to 1768, a rite bearing the Hebrew title of *Cohens* (priests). In the initiation-ceremonies of the Martinists, as the disciples of Martinez were called, not only *internal* communications with the world of spirits, but visible manifestations, that is to say, theurgic evocations and superstitious practices, mingled with an otherwise elevated ideality, were in question. A young officer, named Saint-Martin,[1] was initiated at Bordeaux by Martinez, — one of the most religious and purest souls that ever dwelt on earth. He did not long remain bound to this *cabalistic* sect: while admitting the reality of the superhuman intercourse which was sought therein, he rejected it as dangerous, and confined himself to pure theosophy. The book, *On Truth and Error, by an Unknown Philosopher*,[2] a work of a veiled greatness, and a fascination the more captivating, inasmuch as we feel therein soul communing with soul apart from all earthly preoccupation, the anonymous work of Saint-Martin, did not methodically set forth the common foundation of Hebraic and Platonic mysticism, the theory of man created in a state of enlightenment, liberty, and immortality, then falling by his own fault into the domain of corporeal nature and death; into *the region of fathers and mothers*, as Saint-Martin forcibly says, but able to rise again towards his first source by a good use of the liberty which remains to him.[3] Saint-Martin did not argue like a philosopher or a theologian: he revived these antique ideas by an outpouring of Christian sentiment of singular power. Spiritual life itself appeared in action in his words. Whatever may be thought of the foundation of his doctrine, he was admirable when he showed human science wasting its strength on phenomena, instead of going back to the cause, and foolishly persisting in explaining the universe without God,

[1] The resemblance of his name to that of his master has often caused them to be confounded.

[2] Printed at Lyons, in 1775, under the imprint of Edinburgh.

[3] This is one of the two great contradictory explanations of human destiny, and the antithesis of that of our fathers, the Druids and the bards, which was creation in the lowest degree of being, with an ascending progression.

Digitized by Google

instead of explaining the universe by God. It is not our province to follow him in the development of his gigantic *à priori*;[1] but we must point out the traces of his thought in history. To him belonged the theocratic idea which was to manifest itself, subsequent to 1830, in the Saint-Simonian sect; a sect very contrary, however, to the spirit of Saint-Martin. The *Unknown Philosopher* desired the government of one alone; the most loving, the most enlightened, the *rehabilitated* man should assert his claims, and set himself up by divine authority. There is no legitimate government, he asserts, except that of the *rehabilitated* man over other men who have not attained this condition. In the ideal state, with all humanity *rehabilitated*, and raised again to its primordial condition, there would be no governments: every man would be king.

This idea, long before Saint-Simonism, infiltrated itself more or less obscurely into the Revolution until the time of Robespierre, as the enemies of the formidable leader of the Jacobins instinctively felt; for Saint-Martin, personally an entire stranger to the desperate strife of parties and the sanguinary interpretation which was given to his ideas, was involved in the persecution waged against Catherine Théot, Dom Gerle, and some other revolutionary mystics, shortly before the 9th Thermidor, by the men who were paving the way for the fall of Robespierre.

We must revert to previous years, and to personages less pure and more restless than Saint-Martin. We cannot abstain from mentioning here a fantastic figure who appeared in Paris about the time that Mesmer quitted this capital, in 1781, and who, without forming a sect like Mesmer, made almost as much noise as the discoverer of magnetism; namely, the pretended Count Cagliostro,[2] half-charlatan, half-enthusiast, moved by the ambition to play an extraordinary part rather than by cupidity, and who, owing to the singular attraction of his physiognomy and address, succeeded in gaining credit with numerous men of importance, and in exercising a certain influence over the Masonic lodges,

[1] He published a considerable number of works, both original, and translated from the great German mystic Jacob Bœhme, from 1775 to 1803, the epoch of his death. We will only remark that Saint-Martin did not depart from the ideas of ordinary Christian theology concerning the *source of evil*, the introduction of evil into the world by a being superior to man, and fallen before him; while another celebrated mystic of the eighteenth century, the Swede Swedenborg, admitted no other angels of good and evil than the souls of men transmigrated to another state of existence. The *Wonders of Heaven and Hell*, by Swedenborg, was translated in 1783.

[2] He was a Sicilian, by the name of Joseph Balsamo.

Digitized by Google

while circulating the most absurd fables concerning his origin and life, and evoking the souls of the dead like a magician of antiquity. We shall presently meet him again in the celebrated affair of the *diamond necklace*, which was destined to consummate the discredit of the royal family, and to accelerate the fall of the throne. If the deposition wrung from him by the Holy Office of Rome, in 1790, may be relied on, he revealed the source from which he obtained funds to provide for his errant and luxurious life. This money came from the coffers of a great secret society, founded since 1776, in Germany, by the Bavarian professor Weishaupt. It was Cagliostro's mission to induce the French Freemasons to favor Weishaupt's projects.

The political spirit had already penetrated deeply into Freemasonry. The maxims of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which the Revolution was speedily to consecrate in the imperishable formula of its political ternary, constituted the principal foundation of the high grades recently superadded to the ancient Masonic hierarchy. This hierarchy had been strongly concentrated, in 1772, by the creation of the Grand Orient, with jurisdiction over all the lodges of France and a number of foreign lodges; and Freemasonry, faithful to its habit of seeking supporters on the very steps of the throne, had elected as grand master, after the Prince de Conti, the young Duke de Chartres. Almost all the men destined to play any important part in the Revolution figured in the lodges of Paris or the provinces. Condorcet, a member of the celebrated Lodge of *the Nine Sisters*, into which Voltaire was received, has indicated, in his *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind*, what blows had been dealt to *monarchical idolatry* and *superstition* by secret societies sprung from the *order of the Templars*. In the high grades, moreover, were found represented the different and even contrary tendencies of which we have spoken, united by sentiments of progress, philanthropy, and enfranchisement.

This diversity, which likewise existed outside of France, the German Weishaupt undertook to efface, and at the same time to transform the great intellectual and moral association into a universal conspiracy. This man, "one of the profoundest conspirators that ever existed,"[1] dreamed of doing, to demolish the ancient régime, what Loyola had done to save the Roman

[1] Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*, t. II. p. 84. — See the whole of Louis Blanc's brilliant chapter on the Revolutionary mystics; keeping in mind the difference of our stand-points, especially in the interpretation given to the idea of Saint-Martin.

Digitized by Google

church. He organized by the side of Freemasonry, and with the hope of absorbing it, a counter society of Jesus, with all the maxims and all the practices of the Jesuits carried beyond the Jesuits themselves, — passive obedience, universal espionage, the principle that *the end justifies the means*, etc.[1] In four or five years, indeed, he extended a truly formidable network over Germany, and, by means of his adepts, succeeded in participating in all public affairs, and knowing the cabinet secrets of all the princes. He did not aim, at least for the present, to prepare the way for popular movements, but to make converts of persons of importance, and to raise his affiliated members to important positions in order to influence and direct the governments. What was the aim of *illuminism*, the name which the secret doctrine of Weishaupt borrówed from the mystics? This aim, for which he displayed such surprising practical faculties, and which he pursued by moving so many men and things with such eager ardor for success, and so little care for morality, was the most intangible Utopia that could ever have been imagined by a solitary thinker, remote from the world and from all reality. Such a contrast could scarcely be seen anywhere but in Germany. Weishaupt had erected into an absolute theory the misanthropic sally of Rousseau against the institution of property and society; and without heeding the declaration so explicitly made by Rousseau, of the impossibility of abolishing property and society once established, he proposed as the end of illuminism the abolition of property, social authority, and nationality, and the return of the human race to *the happy condition wherein it formed but one family*,[2] without artificial needs, without useless sciences, with every father a priest and magistrate, — a priest we know not of what religion; for, despite the frequent invocation to the God of Nature in the initiation-rites, many indications give rise to the presumption that Weishaupt, like Diderot and Holbach, had no other God than Nature herself. From his doctrine thus proceeded German *Ultra-Hegelianism*, and the system of *anarchy* recently developed in France, where its physiognomy indicates a foreign origin.[3]

[1] He borrowed at the same time from governments the practice of violating the secrecy of letters.

[2] Here the chimerical spirit of Weishaupt is most clearly manifested. Rousseau, preserving the good sense of genius even in paradox, knew well that the human race in the savage state, far from forming *a single family*, could offer nothing but isolated individuals. It was the *human race* only virtually: it was not such in point of fact, since it was not conscious of its unity.

[3] Although French manners are diametrically opposed to communism, the Utopian

Digitized by Google

The detailed history of German illuminism does not belong to our subject. It is important only to observe that the great majority of the illuminati were never initiated into the whole thought of Weishaupt, which explains the facility with which he united so many men who defined the progress of humanity quite differently from himself. It was in 1782, at the time of the general congress held by the delegates from the Freemasons of all countries at Wilhemsbad, that he made his principal attempt to possess himself of Freemasonry. The illuminati disputed the ascendency in the congress with the Martinist and Swedenborgian mystics, and obtained the affiliation of a great number of the deputies; but these conversions, which did not go to the bottom of things, did not produce the results outside of Germany hoped for by Weishaupt. The propaganda of the illuminati, nevertheless, continued its progress; but it was very difficult for such an organization long to remain secret. Its existence was revealed to the Bavarian government from 1785 to 1786. The papers of Weishaupt fell into the hands of the Elector of Bavaria, who, probably guided by the ex-Jesuits, caused them to be printed, and sent them to all the governments of Europe, in order to warn them of the danger encountered by *all altars and all thrones*. Little heed was given to this warning; and it was with a sovereign prince, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, that the outlawed Weishaupt found an asylum for the remainder of his days. This duke, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, so famous since the Seven-Years' War, and several other German princes, were affiliated to the illuminati of Weishaupt; while the hereditary Prince of Prussia, the nephew of Frederick the Great, was completely ruled by the Swedenborgian and other mystics.[1] The affiliated princes believed that they had nothing to fear from a reformer who had not told them every thing, and who, moreover, in the initiation-rites, protested against all appeal to the force of the masses while men remained as they were, and declared that *thousands and thousands of years* would perhaps be needed to attain the end. It should nevertheless be acknowledged, that, when the French Revolution broke out, our armies met useful auxiliaries among the illuminati of the Rhenish provinces, who probably were unwilling

spirit in France, when it attacks property, is naturally more inclined to invoke organized communism than *anarchy*: the latter is German.

[1] It was to please Frederick the Great, and to draw his nephew from the illuminati, — for all the secret societies were confounded under this name, — that Mirabeau wrote his *Lettre sur Cagliostro et Lavater*, 1786.

Digitized by Google

to go as far as their former leader, but desired to reach the end more quickly.

Weishaupt, however, personally took no part in the great events which so closely followed his retreat to Gotha; and the relations which the other leaders of the illuminati, his successors, formed with Parisian Freemasonry, may indeed have introduced therein some measures adapted to concentrate and strengthen the unity of action of the order, but by no means the personal principles of Weishaupt. The communist doctrines which were manifested later under an evangelical form in Fauchet, and under a material and violent form in Babeuf, proceeded from Morelli and Mabli, more or less rightly understood, rather than from the leader of the illuminati. Freemasonry remained among us, until 1789, the general instrument of philosophy and the laboratory of the Revolution, not the organ of a wholly exceptional sect. In a word, it was well-nigh what it was desired to be by a man of a genius as practical as that of Weishaupt was impractical, and who had projected its reformation in order to give it a more precise end, at the very moment when Weishaupt dreamed of drowning it in his illuminism. In 1776, the youthful Mirabeau had drawn up a plan of reform, in which he proposed to the Masonic order to labor with moderation, but with resolution and persevering activity, progressively to transform the world, to undermine despotism, and to pursue civil, economical, and religious emancipation, and the full conquest of individual liberty.[1]

The men of thought, as we have said, made way for the men of action. While Voltaire, Rousseau, and Turgot, who constituted the link between these two kinds of men, descended to the grave, the strange and restless figure of Mirabeau began to appear on the horizon, with its *magnificent ugliness*, illuminated by so many flashes of light; a Titanic ugliness alike powerful in good and in evil; a physiognomy furrowed by lightnings, in which the signs of the most unbridled passion and the profoundest good sense struggled for mastery; a vicious great man, and very sorry for being such; full of regrets for a past which he could not efface, and for habits which he could not break; and who remained in vice too lofty of mind and even of heart not to feel the price of virtue, — of that virtue which perhaps he only lacked to become the first man of his times, and the undisputed leader of the greatest movement of history.

[1] *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. II. liv. vi. He carried moderation so far at that time as to admit of indemnity to the seigniors who should renounce feudal rights.

Digitized by Google

Let us, at least, do him this justice, — that, through the moral errors and the deplorable compromises of his life, he pursued with full sincerity the conquest of free institutions; thus insuring to his tempestuous memory the forgiveness of posterity. The victim of the abuse of paternal power, the son of a feudal race which had preserved all its primitive strength and violence amidst the general enervation of the noble caste, rebelling against this race which oppressed him, yet retaining its energies, its instincts, and in part its sentiments, he opposed despotism of every kind as a personal enemy. Dragged from prison to prison by the *lettres de cachet* obtained by his father, he wrote the *Essay on Despotism* in the Château of If (1772) at twenty-three;[1] the *Advice to the Hessians*, to urge them to refuse obedience to the unworthy prince who sold their blood to the English in his refuge in Holland (1777); and his book, on *Lettres de Cachet*, in the donjon of Vincennes (1778).[2] Each of his anonymous books, the abrupt eloquence of which reproduced his father's vigorous originality and bursts of ideas cleared from the rubbish and confusion of the aged economist, — each of his books was an act. His writings were already what his immortal discourses were to be.

He in turn, after Turgot, resumed the design of transforming the monarchy, but by means and in conditions quite different. The age had progressed. Reformation in high places no longer sufficed, — was no longer possible. What Mirabeau desired was revolution, with the King at the head: in a word, it was still royalty, but no longer monarchy. The hereditary transmission of the throne was no longer a principle, but a fact subordinate to the sovereignty of the people.[3]

Revolution with royalty was much more difficult than reforma-

[1] "Man's place is in society, whatever Rousseau may have said," etc.

[2] It was in this that he refuted the *enlightened despotism* of his father and other economists, as incompatible with civil liberty; and that he wrote the menacing sentence, "I ask whether there is to-day a government in Europe, the Helvetic and Batavian confederations and the British isles alone excepted, which, judged according to the principles of the Declaration of the American Congress of July 4, 1776, would not have forfeited its rights."

This book was in some sort the *Social Contract* revised and limited with a view to a speedy application. For instance, Mirabeau, while laying down the sovereignty of the people, excluded, like Voltaire and Mabli, the lowest classes from political rights, — an exclusion which he afterwards retracted; and, though he desired the arming of the people (the national guard), it was the land-owning and settled portion of the people. He demanded the responsibility of all magistrates; the entire separation of the legislative, the executive, and the judicial powers; the abolition of entailments, and of all laws tending to favor equality.

[3] *Lettres de cachet*, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. p. 36.

Digitized by Google

tion by royalty would lately have been: the chances of realization, above all the chances of duration, were much less: perhaps it was not yet an absolute impossibility, at least for a brief period.

Scarcely released from his long captivity (about the end of 1780), Mirabeau strove to redeem himself from discredit, and to effect a reconciliation with the government in order to counsel it, at the same time that he continued his innovating, or, to speak more truly, revolutionary writings. He wrote a memorial to the Queen; he projected for her, in order to restore her popularity and to give her active occupation, a kind of ministry of the fine arts; he wished her to finish the Louvre, and to form the Gallery of the Museum with all the masterpieces of art which were piled up in obscurity in the turrets of the royal residences; he threw out a multitude of ingenious or grand ideas concerning the embellishment of Paris, which have since been partly realized. On the other hand, he published under his name, and with great éclat, at the instigation of Franklin, his *Considerations on the Order of Cincinnatus*, in which he attacked every species of privilege attached to the nobility, while attacking the kind of republican knighthood which the officers of the liberating army of the United States had just instituted among themselves (September, 1784).[1] He strove to have one foot in the cabinet, and the other on the most advanced ground of the boldest writers. For several years, his prophetic words did not weary of resounding in the ears of the men of power who were about to cease to exist! But to what prophet have powers destined to perish ever hearkened?

[1] The danger of this association was in the design entertained by the American officers of transmitting the decoration of the Cincinnatus to their children. They abandoned the project.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS XVI. (CONCLUDED.)

LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY. — Ministry of CALONNE. Financial Chaos. *The Diamond Necklace.* Calonne attempts to undertake Reform in his Turn. ASSEMBLY OF THE NOTABLES. Acknowledgment of the Deficit. Fall of Calonne. Ministry of Brienne. Renewal of the Dissensions between the Crown and the Parliaments. The Parliament of Paris demands the STATES-GENERAL. Humiliation Abroad. Affairs of Holland. Brienne imitates Maupeou's Opposition to the Parliaments. The *Plenary Court.* The Nobility supports the Parliaments. Disturbances in Brittany, Béarn, and Dauphiny. Assembly of Vizille. Promise of the STATES-GENERAL for 1789. Beginning of Bankruptcy. Fall of Brienne. Recall of Necker. Second Assembly of the Notables. Great Movement of the Political Press. Contest between the Third Estate and the Privileged Orders. Pamphlet of Sieyès, *What is the Third Estate?* Disturbances in Brittany. MIRABEAU in Provence. The Elections. THE CAHIERS. Opening of the STATES-GENERAL. The Third Estate declares itself the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. END OF THE ANCIENT RÉGIME AND OF THE MONARCHY.

1783–1789.

ALMOST immediately after the close of the war again brought the royal power face to face with the internal perils, we have seen the ministry of finance, the most important ministry, fall into the hands of a new comptroller-general, to whom Mirabeau was to lend, for a brief time, the assistance of his pen.

What was the real worth of this so much disputed personage? Concerning Calonne's morality, there is but one opinion;[1] concerning his capacity, opinions are divided. All grant him a captivating mind, a great facility of conception and labor, and a singular gift of fascination; but, in general, it has been believed, either that he suffered himself to be carried away by the illusions with which he fascinated others, or that his perverse frivolity staked the destinies of the State from day to day in a great game of chance. "Your vision is always bounded by the success of the moment," wrote Mirabeau to him in a fit of anger; "and the

[1] His conduct towards La Chalotais had been even more ignominious than we have described it: he had obtained the confidence of this great magistrate in order to weave a treacherous plot for his destruction.

Digitized by Google

horizon of your ideas never extends any farther."[1] An historian of our times[2] believes, on the contrary, that the frivolity was only superficial; that Calonne followed a profound and well-digested plan; that he completed the ruin of the finances in the manner that we shall witness, only because he was persuaded that half-measures were powerless, and that the privileged orders would renounce their privileges only in the presence of absolute necessity and on the brink of appalling ruin; and that he wished to bring them, without their knowledge, to the brink of this gulf, and to terrify them by its sudden revelation.

We do not attribute to this man such consistency and profundity; neither do we attribute to him all the blindness which others ascribe to him. He took the finances as a venture; but the adventurer had too much intelligence not to suspect at least that he would finally reach a point where all known expedients would become impracticable. "We will dextrously readjust affairs; we will sustain them as long as we can by force of charlatanism and audacity; we will live on joyously from day to day; we will grant to all who ask; we will give the court a last festival: then, when the cup is empty, if we can no longer fill it, we will launch on the ocean of great reforms, and copy Turgot as late as possible. Meanwhile, we shall have enjoyed and lived." These were probably the true sentiments of this man, who acknowledged to a grave personage, the aged Machault, that he would not have undertaken the King's affairs had it not been for the bad condition of his own.[3]

The King's affairs were indeed in a deplorable state when Calonne entered the comptroller-generalship. The treasury was empty.[4] The old and new systems of finance, the revenue-

[1] See Mirabeau's forcible list of charges against Calonne, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 192.

[2] Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution française*, t. II. ch. v.

[3] He made indeed another confession, to the great surprise of the ex-minister, who had done nothing, according to his own words, "to merit such extraordinary confidence." He told him, that, in his first interview with the King, he had acknowledged to Louis XVI. that his debts amounted to two hundred and twenty thousand francs. "A comptroller-general," he said to the King, "can easily find means of liquidating his debts; but I prefer to owe every thing to the goodness of your majesty." Louis, without saying a word, took from a desk two hundred and thirty thousand francs' worth of stock of the Company of the Waters of Paris, and gave them to Calonne, who kept the stock, and succeeded in paying his debts in another manner! — See Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 279.

[4] There were only three hundred and sixty thousand francs in the treasury. Calonne, in his *Memorial to the King*, to produce more effect, said that there were only two bags of twelve hundred crowns each.

Digitized by Google

farmers and the bankers, — credit under both its forms, — were disorganized by the annulment of the leases of the farms, and the suspension of payment by the bank of discount. The consolidated debt had increased three hundred and forty-five millions since the fall of Necker, or in two years and a half. There existed an arrearage of two hundred and twenty millions on the marine, of one hundred and seventy millions on various other things, one hundred and seventy-six millions of advances, and a deficit of eighty millions, for the current year; in all, six hundred and forty-six millions of floating debt due. The annual revenue amounted to five hundred and five millions; but from this it was necessary to deduct two hundred and five millions for *rentes* constituted, and interest on advances and securities, together with forty-five millions for the redemption of annuities and lotteries: there remained, therefore, but two hundred and fifty-five millions at the disposal of the government, and the ordinary expenses required at least three hundred millions. The annual deficit, until the redemption of all the annuities and lotteries, that is for many years, must be, therefore, fifty millions.[1]

Calonne began his career brilliantly. He gained a majority in the council[2] by inducing Vergennes to consent to the suppression of the committee of finance, which placed those of the ministers who were not members of it in an inferior position. He won the favor of the financiers by reëstablishing the lease of the farms (November 9, 1783). He revived credit by suppressing the compulsory currency of the notes of the bank of discount before the time fixed by his predecessor. The bankers and a treasury-broker enabled the bank to meet its engagements; and a favorable official statement of its assets and debts, adroitly circulated among the people, reanimated confidence: a thousand new shares which were issued were readily taken, and the bank enlarged its operations, and regained the greatest favor.[3] Calonne took advantage of this first success to close a loan of his predecessor which had not been filled, and to open another of one hundred millions of life-*rentes*, on conditions seductive to the lenders, and onerous to the State (December, 1783). The parliament

[1] Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 250.

[2] He entered the council, as minister of State, January 23, 1784.

[3] The bank was obliged always to hold specie to the amount of at least one-fourth of the value of the notes in circulation: the discount was limited to ninety days, at four per cent a month, and four and a half per cent for a longer term. — *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXIII. p. 35.

Digitized by Google

registered it, with remonstrances. It cost Calonne nothing to reply to remonstrances by promises. He had lavished them in advance in the preamble of the edict announcing the loan: "Order, economy, and regularity presided over all transactions; and the establishment of a balance between the receipts and expenditures would speedily lead to the diminution of the taxes." The loan succeeded to such a degree, that it attained a premium of eleven per cent above the par value. The Dutch, who took advantage of peace to withdraw their money from the Bank of England and invest it in France, greatly conduced to its prompt success.

A decree of the council, March 14, 1784, seemed to begin to justify the fair promises of Calonne. The winter having been long and severe, and followed by great inundations, the King granted seven millions for assistance and repairs, to be obtained in great part by retrenchment in the King's household, the public buildings, the pensions, the favors, and the large salaries. It was announced that the preparatory inquiries (commenced under Turgot) for the suppression of the internal customs were being actively carried forward. In August, 1784, a sinking-fund was again created, which was endowed with three millions a year, and to which were likewise assigned the arrears of the perpetual *rentes* which were extinguished with these three millions, and of the life-*rentes* in proportion to their extinction, estimated at twelve million francs a year. According to the calculations furnished to Calonne by a friend of Mirabeau, an able financier, by the name of Panchaud, who had studied the mechanism of compound interest, already successfully employed by the English, the new fund would extinguish, in twenty-five years, more than twelve hundred and sixty millions of the debt, both floating and consolidated, and liberate the treasury from more than ninety-one millions of arrears and other annual obligations. Calonne declared that even war, should it be renewed, would not suspend the operations of this liberating institution.[1]

Wise men shook their heads; but the public was for a moment dazzled. Calonne achieved a truly incredible triumph. If, in this too-forgetful nation, there is any part of the population which remembers and obstinately retains its affections and hatreds, it is doubtless Brittany. It was in the country of La Chalotais that Calonne was best known; yet he found means of raising the cry

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVII. p. 464; Bailli, t. II. p. 253; Droz, t. I. p. 454.

Digitized by Google

of "*Long live Calonne!*" in Rennes itself, at the gates of that Palace of Justice which had witnessed his ignominy! His predecessor, the keeper of the seals, and the minister of the King's household, had plotted to suppress the States of Brittany, and to reduce this province to the condition of the *pays d'élection*. Calonne procured the abandonment of this dangerous and iniquitous undertaking; protested to and partly persuaded the most influential Bretons that he had formerly been calumniated; caused the restitution to the States of the appointment of their deputies, with other concessions; and obtained from them, with acclamations, a gratuity of double the usual amount! (November–December, 1784.)[1]

The joy of the court was far greater than that of the public; but the conduct of affairs suited this little privileged world too well for the satisfaction long to be shared by society at large. Calonne was the first to laugh with the courtiers at the grave maxims which he displayed before the King, the parliaments, and the public. He explained to them his true economic theory, a *broad economy*, which consisted in spending freely in order to appear rich, and in appearing rich in order to be able to borrow largely. The courtiers understood this kind of economy better than that of Turgot and Necker. Practice corresponded to theory. The treasury was open without reservation to the princes, the Queen, and the men in credit. The brothers of the King were not content with their immense revenues: their debts were paid. The Queen desired Saint-Cloud: that magnificent residence of the Duke of Orleans was purchased for her. The Prince de Guémené had become bankrupt for thirty millions, as has already been said: the domain of Lorient and some other feudal estates of the Rohans were purchased of him for the King, at an exorbitant price, to aid him in appeasing his creditors. Every great noble involved in debt who had an estate to sell offered it to the King. In three years, seventy millions were expended in these useless and onerous purchases.[2] Those who wished to exchange estates instead of selling them were equally well received; and it is needless to say that the crown was never the gainer in these transactions. Calonne and his friends did not forget themselves in obliging others. All means were legitimate to the comptroller-general that would secure him partisans. The *croupes* and preferred shares

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXVII. p. 101; Droz, t. I. p. 402.

[2] We must deduct from Calonne's account Rambouillet, purchased before his accession, despite his predecessor.

Digitized by Google

in the farms and the administration of the indirect taxes by the government, the leases and contracts given out privately instead of being put up for competition, and the increase and reversion of pensions, reappeared, and this at the very moment that a royal declaration (May 8, 1785) announced that pensions would be granted thenceforth only in proportion to the extinction of those existing. Fiscal dues were null and void with respect to all who had access to the comptroller-general. Calonne daily granted the diminution or entire remission of the duties imposed upon the transmission of office or the transfer of feudal estates. The revenues from the domains, the aids, the villain-taxes, and the salt-taxes, lost more than two millions annually through remissions by favor. The prodigious amount of the royal orders on the treasury, the expenditures screened from the regular accounts, exceeded, after the fall of Necker, any thing that had been witnessed under Louis XV. The royal orders on the treasury amounted, in 1785, to more than one hundred and thirty-six millions,[1] more than twenty-one millions of which were in drafts at sight, for what persons or what objects no one knew. All the expenses increased at a mad rate. The spirit of indolence and disorder invaded the bureaux, after the example of the cabinet of the minister. What had constituted eight divisions and cost three hundred thousand francs in the time of the Abbé Terrai, laborious and orderly in his vices, was transformed, under Calonne, into twenty-eight departments, which expended three millions.

Among so many insane and criminal dilapidations, a single object of expenditure would have been deserving of praise, although display had too great a part therein, had the continuance and completion of what was undertaken been insured by a provident administration; namely, those works commenced everywhere for the embellishment and sanitary improvement of the large cities, and especially the works in the seaports and on the canals, — works in which the government was seconded, and sometimes anticipated by the provinces and towns. On seeing the fruitful activity displayed in enlarging or improving the harbors of Havre, Dunkirk, Dieppe, La Rochelle, Agde, and Cette, and completing the canalization of Languedoc[2] by joining the basin of the Rhone to those of the Loire, the Seine, and the Rhone, by three new canals,[3] — on

[1] They had amounted to still more in 1783, — more than one hundred and forty-five millions. — See Bailli, *Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 266.

[2] The canal from Beaucaire to Aigues-Mortes.

[3] The Central, the Burgundy, and the Rhone and the Rhine Canals. The plans of the Berry Canal were also decided upon in 1786.

Digitized by Google

seeing that Titanic undertaking of Cherbourg which was at last to realize the idea of Colbert,[1] and to give to France, in spite of Nature, a formidable port of war at the entrance of the Channel, who could have believed himself on the eve of the fall of a monarchy and a system of society?

To provide for the requirements of such a gift, Calonne completed the ruin of the future. He paid annually nearly thirty millions of interest on the advances made to the treasury. He sold to the counties of Bar-sur-Seine and Auxerre the redemption of the aids in perpetuity; and, in order to obtain a loan of ten millions at interest from the States of maritime Flanders, he pledged to them for ten years, in consideration of a trifling tribute, the taxes on consumption, termed *Droits des quatre membres de Flandre*. He restored the monopoly of the India trade by establishing a new privileged company, upon which he relied for advances in case of need.[2] He raised money by creating fiscal offices; reëstablished all those *alternate* offices, those duplicate posts, which had been abolished under Turgot and Necker; and made an enormous present, also at the expense of the State, to the receivers-general, the number of which he had just increased from twelve to forty-eight. Some thirty-two millions of those rescripts, the payment of which had formerly been suspended by Terrai, were still in circulation. Instead of redeeming this depreciated paper from the sinking-fund, Calonne permitted the receivers-general to buy it up at a low rate, then redeemed it at par.

The first loan of Calonne and the fruits of his expedients were consumed. Fresh masses of gold were needed; but meanwhile the public had already become disenchanted. A work had been published during the interval, very inopportunely for the comptroller-general (the end of 1784),—Necker's book on the *Administration of Finance*,[3] the work of the leisure of a fallen minister who was very desirous of retrieving his position, and of demonstrating his necessity to the public. This book, far from erring

[1] And to exceed the idea of Vauban, who only desired to excavate a harbor for thirty or forty ships near the locality called the *Fosse du Galet*. The gigantic plan of transforming the open roadstead of Cherbourg into a roadstead enclosed by an artificial island a league in length, which was to be *made* a league from the coast, was proposed by La Bretonnière, a captain of the navy, in 1777. His idea was adopted, but not his means of execution; and, after the peace of 1783, the construction of the prodigious dike was commenced, after the plan of the engineer Cessart.

[2] The India trade, which had so much declined, had increased from eight to twenty millions since the suppression of the monopoly.

[3] Three volumes 8vo, bearing the imprint of no city.

Digitized by Google

through excessive boldness, indicated a mind already exceeded by the progress of events. Necker had not yet advanced beyond partial reforms compatible with the maintenance of privileges; yet the good sense and morality which characterized his views presented a contrast to what was being done in the comptroller-generalship, which none could fail to discern.[1] His plans concerning the modification of the funds and the collection of the taxes were very well received by that public opinion to which he was accustomed to appeal, and indulgence was shown to the excessive personality which rendered the introduction to his work almost nauseating. The King, on the contrary, was greatly displeased that Necker should have printed and circulated the book without permission. A very respectful letter which accompanied a presentation-copy did not reconcile him to the author; and it was for a moment in question of notifying Necker that he must leave France, and even of denouncing his book to the parliaments, as having violated the secrets of the State. The King did not decide to go so far; but the ex-minister was forbidden to reside in Paris.[2]

This did not regain Calonne the public favor, which was beginning to be alienated. A second loan of one hundred and twenty-five millions, arranged on a new plan, and attractive to the lenders, but very disadvantageous to the treasury,[3] was registered by the parliament only after warm remonstrances, and by the express command of the King (December 30, 1784).[4] This loan was popular at first, owing to its adroit distribution; but confidence soon declined, and various financial companies, the Bank of Discount, the Company of the Waters of Paris, and the Spanish Bank of St. Charles, carried on a formidable competition with the ministerial issues. The shares of these companies became the object of an unbridled stock-gambling. Calonne took the offensive by a decree

[1] There is an excellent refutation, in his book, of the principle of a single tax levied on real estate alone, desired by the physiocrats (t. I. ch. vi.). He also opposes, in a practical point of view, the more plausible idea of a single tax on the presumed capacities of each individual.

[2] Soulavie, *Mém. sur le règne de Louis XVI.*, t. IV. p. 281. He gives the original documents.

[3] The loan was to be extinguished within twenty-five years by annual redemptions drawn by lot: the redemptions were to be accompanied with a progressive increase of the remaining capital, so that the last lenders in the twenty-fifth year received double the amount of their capital.

[4] The provincial parliaments were beginning again to talk of the States-General: that of Besançon as early as July, 1783, before the time of Calonne; that of Bordeaux in January, 1785.

Digitized by Google

of the council which not only prohibited for the future, but annulled the past premium transactions in the stock dividends of the Bank of Discount (January, 1785); then launched against the stock-gamblers a powerful adversary, Mirabeau, who, by pamphlets marked with the energy and lucidity which he threw into every thing, lowered the artificial and immoderate price of stock. The Spanish government, the protector of the Bank of St. Charles, complained. Mirabeau was abandoned, and two of his writings were suppressed by decree of the council: but, at the same time, Calonne prosecuted the war against premium transactions, and declared all agreements null and void by which one party sold what he did not possess, and the other purchased without having the funds; that is, all gambling or bets on the rise or fall resolving themselves into the payment of the difference.[1] The decree of the council invalidated none of the transactions on time except those the titles of which should be deposited within the month of November (August 7). Calonne had exceeded his end. All the bankers, all the financiers, were engaged in the speculations which he proscribed. A panic declared itself: money suddenly became restricted, and the best paper could not be discounted for less than seven or eight per cent. The Bank of Discount refused to advance any more funds, and itself solicited assistance from the comptroller-general.

The one hundred and twenty-five million loan gained nothing thereby, and fell as much or more than the shares. Calonne vainly sought to disguise his embarrassment by redeeming, by way of braggadocio and without necessity, twenty-nine millions of stock-receipts on which the State was paying but five per cent interest (August, 1785). His efforts to revive the currency of the royal paper failed.[2] He was forced to retrace his steps; and, after aiding the bankers to weather the crisis, he relaxed the rigorous provisions of the decree of August 7 by a new decree (October 2, 1785), and appointed royal commissioners to make a kind of wholesale settlement between the sellers and the buyers in the transactions on time.[3]

[1] It must be confessed that the official character given to transactions on time on the part of the Bourse was not an indication of progress in public morality.

[2] He set to work very badly. "He intrusted, without the King's permission, nearly twelve millions' worth of assignments on the domains to friends who were to employ them in sustaining the public funds, and who, through ignorance, knavery, or negligence, caused the treasury to lose the greater part of it." — Droz, t. I. p. 457.

[3] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXIX. pp. 200, 249, 256; t. XXX. p. 1; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 7; *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 181, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

Calonne had made his peace with the financiers, who saw the source of new profits in the increasing necessities of the treasury; but he was unable to regain public favor once disenchanted, and he had at once against him the men of enlightenment and the suffering masses. Two rigorous winters, the second of which was followed by an excessive drought, had inflicted great wretchedness on the rural districts. The government encouraged the introduction of foreign cattle, interdicted the exportation of grain, authorized the peasants to pasture their cattle in the woods of the crown and the religious communities, and forbade the monopolization of forage: but these protective measures, which were not all equally dictated by sound political economy, were more than compensated for by the increased rigor of the prosecutions against the tax-payers; and men saw with indignation the fiscal agents wresting the pence from the poor by violence, and neglecting their claims on the gold of the rich and the men in credit.[1]

Through all the commotion made by Calonne, the ominous creaking of the financial machine was heard; yet no reform of any kind occurred to distract the public attention. The parliament itself, so much opposed to innovation, at the instigation of a relative of Malesherbes, the President de Lamoignon, had presented to the King a memorial against the costs of law and the judges' fees (May, 1784): the memorial of the parliament remained buried at Versailles. The year after, on the occasion of a suit which excited great interest, a magistrate of the parliament of Bordeaux, who had rendered himself illustrious at the bar before entering the parliamentary magistracy, the President Dupati, renewed, with the authority of his position, the attacks of the philosophers on secret trials, the isolation of the accused, and all our forms of criminal law. The memorial of Dupati having been published at Paris, the parliament, far outdone in its zeal for reform, commenced proceedings against the Bordeaux president. The King protected Dupati against the parliament; but the criminal jurisprudence remained untouched (1785–1786).[2]

The government was proceeding to disruption at home with Calonne; it was becoming enfeebled abroad with Vergennes. Before the end of the American War, various incidents had transpired in Europe which had been far from satisfying public

[1] Bailli, t. II. p. 261; *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXIX. p. 52.

[2] The writing of President Dupati called forth many others on the same subject. Among the authors is remarked, by the side of the name of Condorcet, that of Brissot de Warville.

Digitized by Google

opinion. For instance, at Geneva, from 1779 to 1782, the majority of the population having attempted to escape from the exclusive supremacy of a few families who dictated the law in the Council of the Two Hundred, and undertaken to interpret the Genevese constitution in a more democratic sense, the aristocracy appealed to the powers who had guaranteed the compact of 1739; that is, to France, Sardinia, and Berne. The three powers interfered by arms (June, 1782), threatened to attack Geneva, and forced the Genevese to return to the yoke of their patricians. The French public did not willingly see the party of Rousseau treated in this manner in his own city, and democracy stifled in Europe by the same hands that were aiding it to triumph in America. The Bourbon monarchy had cause to repent of it: a great number of Genevese, banished by their restored patricians, spread through England and France, and several among them figured among the most ardent promoters of the Revolution.

Some time before, Vergennes had been reproached for having suffered the House of Austria to establish itself on the Rhine by the election of the Archduke Maximilian to the coadjutorship of Cologne and Münster (1780). It would have been to the interest of France to concert with Prussia to prevent this choice: but Vergennes had not been free; he had been forced to yield to the ascendency of the Queen.

Events of graver importance soon occurred on the Black Sea. One of the motives alleged by Vergennes for so eagerly hastening the peace with England had been the necessity of preparing to oppose the projects of Russia and Austria against the Ottoman empire. We have seen, that, in 1779, he had caused Turkey to consent, in order to obtain peace, to grant the Russians the free navigation of the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and all the Ottoman waters, the independence of the Tartars, and the reduction of the Ottoman suzerainty over Wallachia and Moldavia almost to a vain title; that is, greatly to exceed the concessions of the treaty of Kanardschy. It seemed as if the cabinet of Versailles should at least have felt itself obliged to insure respect to the new compact.

The conditions thereof were not for an instant observed. Catharine had no sooner made the Crimea independent than she labored to make it Russian: the one had been only the means of the other. She instigated a rebellion against the Khan of the Tartars, the partisan of Turkey, which compelled him to take flight, and caused a successor to be elected in his stead who sold his sovereignty to Russia (end of 1782). The Tartars rose in de-

Digitized by Google

fence of their nationality. They were overpowered by the Muscovite forces with frightful cruelties. The Russians slaughtered thirty thousand of these unfortunates, men, women, and children. Russian colonies were established in the Crimea: Taman and Kooban were occupied by Catharine's soldiers. The Czarina proceeded boldly towards her ends, sure as she was of Austria by a secret treaty. Since his mother's death, Joseph II. had given full scope to his double passion for internal reform and external invasion: on the one hand, he seemed in haste to precede France in the application of the doctrines taught by the French philosophers, without employing therein the prudently selfish caution which had been preserved by the great Frederick, his predecessor in this path;[2] on the other, he endeavored to

[1] Maria Theresa had died in November, 1780.

[2] Under Maria Theresa herself, the current of the age had made some inroads upon the abuses of the Middle Ages. Ecclesiastics had been forbidden to be present at the drawing-up of wills. The right of asylum had been abolished, and the Inquisition suppressed in Milanais, as well as the monastic prisons. The nobility and the clergy had been subjected to a tax on real estate; much less, it is true, than that paid by the *roturiers*. The peasants, oppressed by their lords, had been authorized to appeal to the sovereign courts. Scarcely had Maria Theresa closed her eyes, when Joseph gave himself full scope. He proclaimed a uniform judicial and administrative system throughout his empire, before which the national and provincial assemblies, the local laws, and the feudal jurisdictions, were to disappear. He prescribed the unity of taxation, and the suppression of tithes, *corvées*, and all personal tributes, and abolished primogenitureship. Seconding and carrying to its farthest limit, in behalf of the State, the movement which was then leading the ecclesiastical princes and the German Catholic clergy to restrict the authority of the Pope (the movement of which Van Espen, Hontheim (*Febronius*), and Eybel were the theorists), he interdicted recourse to Rome for dispensations and reserved cases, and direct communication of the bishops with Rome; reduced the revenues of the richest bishoprics; suppressed some bishoprics, created others; forbade all relations between monastic orders and foreign superiors; suppressed more than two thousand convents, and kept only seven hundred, on condition that they devoted themselves to instruction; increased the number of curés; suppressed the seminaries superintended by the bishops; forbade pilgrimages; diminished the number of festivals; caused a political and moral catechism to be composed for the youth; imparted a great impulse to primary instruction; instituted civil marriage; authorized divorce in certain cases; established equality before death by the uniformity of funeral ceremonies and of inhumation; founded a multitude of hospitals, and asylums for orphans and poor children; abolished the penalty of death, except for assassins; established a regular and uniform military conscription; and, lastly, instituted the liberty of worship by law, and the liberty of the press, at least in point of fact.

As has often been said, Joseph attempted in advance, in the Austrian States, almost all the social reforms which were to be accomplished by the Constituent Assembly in France, but not with the same success. The arbitrary will of a single man, attacking simultaneously ancient liberties and abuses, could not be equivalent to the action of a whole people upon itself. The Constituent Assembly, moreover, had to act upon a nation wherein it was only in question to consummate the natural unity, for which ages had paved the way. Joseph II., on the contrary, attempted to impose an artificial unity upon different peoples. He believed that he could *make* a nation, and failed

Digitized by Google

apply the very unphilosophical system of expediency, that is, of the right of the stronger, with as little scruple, but with much less ability, than Frederick had done. When the cabinet of Versailles attempted to dissuade him from uniting with Catharine against the Turks, he did not immediately acknowledge his compact with Russia, but let it be understood, that, in order to maintain the balance of power, he should be obliged "to extend his possessions in proportion to what Russia might acquire;" and showed himself insensible to the remonstrances of France on the immorality of this *monstrous system*.

The cabinet of Versailles then turned to Prussia, and entered into a negotiation with Frederick II. for the purpose of arresting the work of the reduction of the Ottoman empire. Nothing, however, was further from Vergennes' thoughts than a great war against Russia and Austria. He had abandoned in advance the chief point at stake, which was nothing less than the Crimea and the Kooban; that is to say, he consented for Russia to keep all she had taken, provided that Austria took nothing. Meanwhile, Joseph II. having signified to France his intention of supporting the Czarina, his ally, with one hundred and twenty thousand men, the French ambassador to Constantinople, Saint-Priest, was ordered to urge the Ottoman Porte to yield to the Russian demands. The Divan, no longer hoping for assistance, signed a new treaty, January 8, 1784, which ceded to Russia the sovereignty of the Crimea, the Island of Taman, and the Kooban. The Ottoman empire definitively lost its faithful vanguard of Little Tartary. The full possession of the Sea of Azof, and the decided preponderance in the Black Sea, were secured thenceforth to the Russians.

The prompt conclusion of the treaty disconcerted the pretensions of Joseph II., who was preparing to invade Wallachia and Moldavia, and who no longer had either the pretext or the power to act. "At least," said Vergennes, in endeavoring to justify his policy, — "at least the Emperor has obtained nothing; and the satisfaction of the court of St. Petersburg, which indeed weighs heavily on the Turks, is not prejudicial to France."[1] Vergennes strove to delude others, and perhaps himself, concerning the enormous concession wrung from him by the desire for peace.

The indifference and absolute inaction of England in the pres-

before this impossible work. — See the picture of his reign in the *Histoire de Joseph II.* by M. Paganel, 2d edition, 1853.

[1] Flassan, t. VII. p. 399; Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. pp. 64–80.

Digitized by Google

ence of the progress of Russia were perhaps more surprising than the weakness of France. Had Vergennes believed in the possibility of a reconciliation with the English, he would have probably been less yielding in the Levant.

The affair of Turkey was scarcely terminated, at least for a moment, when Joseph II., disappointed in the direction of the East, raised a new quarrel in the West. Towards the close of 1787, wearied of the humiliation of enduring the presence of foreign garrisons in his possessions in the Netherlands, he had sent back the Dutch troops from the places of the *Barrier*, become useless, according to him, since the alliance of the House of Austria with the Bourbons; and had caused the places fortified at great expense against France to be dismantled, except Luxembourg, Ostend, and the citadels of Antwerp and Namur. The Revolution was to profit by this operation in 1792! Holland vainly appealed to former treaties. Joseph went much farther: in 1784, after some encroachments by force, he summoned the United Provinces to cede to him Maëstricht, with various portions of territory on the Scheldt and the Meuse, and to pay him heavy indemnities for the undue enjoyment of these territories and for pretended debts; then, suddenly revealing his true aim, he offered to desist from his demands in consideration of the opening of the Scheldt, and the freedom of maritime commerce for his subjects of the Austrian Netherlands. The first pretensions of Joseph were absurd; the last, essentially contrary to positive law,—to law founded on treaties,—was in conformity with natural law, which was assuredly flagrantly violated by agreements which interdicted to the inhabitants on the banks of the Scheldt the use of the beautiful stream which God had given them. It may be said, however, that it was not for the head of an empire so artificial as Austria to appeal to natural law.

Be this as it may, Joseph determined to pay no attention to the refusal of Holland. He ordered two ships to attempt the passage of the Scheldt: the Dutch fired upon them, and forced them to strike their flag. The Emperor recalled his ambassador from the Hague. The Dutch invoked the assistance of France. Vergennes, who at that very moment was negotiating with the States-General a compact of alliance, to which he rightfully attached much importance, felt that it was necessary, at any price, to prevent the Dutch from throwing themselves into the arms of England; and induced the King to notify Vienna that France would oppose any aggression against the United Provinces (No-

Digitized by Google

vember, 1784). Two army-corps were assembled in Flanders and Alsace; but, at the same time, France made the Emperor new offers of mediation. Joseph accepted with a very bad grace: after long discussions, he reduced his pretensions to demanding satisfaction for the insult to his flag, some inconsiderable territorial cessions, and a pecuniary indemnity. This last clause well-nigh broke off the negotiations. The Dutch would only consent to give five million five hundred thousand florins: Joseph demanded ten. The cabinet of Versailles settled the question by paying the remaining four and a half millions. By this far from heroic expedient, a war was averted which would probably have become general, and have divided Europe into two camps.

On the same day of the definitive treaty between the Emperor and Holland, a defensive compact of alliance was signed between Holland and France (November 10, 1785).[1]

The public was greatly shocked to see France once more paying Austria, and the Queen's unpopularity was thereby increased. This negotiation, however, had not been badly conducted; and success might have justified the government of Louis XVI., had it known how to maintain vigorously, and to carry out in good faith, the useful alliance which had just attached to France the Dutch republic, so long the instrument of England. Unhappily, nothing of the kind was done.

Vergennes, who erred generally by too much circumspection, was lacking in it on a grave occasion. In order, probably, to win the favor of the Queen, who complained of seeing him always opposed to her brother and her house, he suffered himself to be persuaded to favor a new design, by which the indefatigable Joseph II. sought to indemnify himself for his successive reverses. Joseph had returned to his favorite project of annexing Bavaria to Austria. Having been unable to obtain possession of it by force, he now aimed at procuring it by exchange. Catharine II., who was fully determined to resume the work of the dismemberment of Turkey, and who thought that she might again have need of the Emperor, strove, by zealously seconding him, to make him forget that she had not given him his share in the East. January 13, 1785, the Elector-Palatine, Duke of Bavaria, engaged to cede Bavaria to the Emperor in exchange for the Austrian Netherlands, the duchy of Luxembourg and the county of Namur excepted. With these two provinces, Joseph designed to pur-

[1] See the negotiation in Garden, *Hist. des Traités de paix*, t. V. pp. 52–71; and Flassan, t. VII. pp. 399–410.

Digitized by Google

chase the consent of France. The Emperor promised his good offices to the Elector to obtain for him the title of *King of Burgundy*.[1] A Russian agent was commissioned to communicate the treaty of exchange to the heir presumptive of Bavaria, Duke Maximilian of Deux-Ponts (afterwards King of Bavaria), and to signify to him, that, if he refused his consent, it would be dispensed with. The Duke of Deux-Ponts refused as in 1778, and appealed to the courts of Versailles and Berlin. Frederick broke forth with such violence, that the French cabinet disavowed all participation in the Emperor's design, and entreated him to abandon it. For the fourth time, Joseph recoiled before the resistance roused by his ambition, and more than ever deserved the reputation of "the man who began every thing, and finished nothing."[2] But the matter did not stop there. Frederick determined to erect a barrier which would prevent the Emperor from renewing his attempts, and, greatly dissatisfied with the court of France, addressed himself to the King of England as Elector of Hanover. He organized, July 23, 1785, with the Electors of Hanover, Saxe, and Mayence, and the Princes of Mecklenburg, Hesse, Baden, etc., a confederation, for the purpose of maintaining the constitution of the Empire, the rights of the States, the family compacts, and the compacts of succession. The reconciliation of England and Prussia, which was at the bottom of this Germanic league, was a grave fact, and alarming to French interests, as was soon to be experienced. Never should the cabinet of Versailles have maintained views calculated to estrange Prussia, unless it was fully decided to pursue them to the end, which was neither its design, nor for the interest of France.[3]

In short, the French government was declining without, and was gradually losing the ground that it had regained by the American War. Within, it was rapidly drifting to ruin. Events, after having been so long hesitating and in suspense, were violently accelerated. Great scandals, the premonitory symptoms of catastrophes, assumed a strange and unheard-of character. The commotion caused by the bankruptcy of the Prince de Guémené was silenced by the far more scandalous trial of another prince of the same house, — the Cardinal de Rohan, Bishop of Strasbourg,

[1] It will be remembered that the Netherlands formed in the Empire the *Burgundian Circle*.

[2] *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 230.

[3] Garden, *Hist. des Traité de paix*, t. IV. pp. 269–282; Soulavie, *Mém. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. V. pp. 65–71.

Digitized by Google

and Grand Almoner of the Crown. The cardinal's opponent in the suit was no less a personage than the Queen of France! On Assumption Day, August 15, the court thronged the gallery of Versailles: the service was about to begin, and the grand almoner was at hand, ready to repair to the chapel in his pontifical robes, when suddenly he was summoned to the King's apartments. He did not return; and the rumor was spread that he had set out for Paris, escorted by an officer of the body-guards. He was conducted to the Bastille! September 5, 1785, letters-patent of the King indicted the Cardinal de Rohan before the Great Chamber of the parliament, with a Countess de La Motte-Valois, the descendant of an illegitimate son of Henri II., as having been guilty of treason towards the royal majesty by usurping the name of the Queen, for the purpose of buying on credit, from the jewellers, a magnificent diamond necklace worth sixteen hundred thousand francs.

The clergy claimed the right of the accused to be tried by his peers, its order, and not by the secular magistracy. Rohan, who had at first himself demanded a trial by the parliament, retraced his steps, protested, and asked to be sent before the judges of the church. The Pope, in consistory, suspended Rohan from the prerogatives of the cardinalship because he had recognized the competence of the parliament, and restored him his honors only on being apprised of his tardy protest. The parliament took no notice of it, and retained the suit. It was the first time that the Roman purple had been humbled before the secular courts and the common law. A few years earlier, public opinion would have been wholly preoccupied with this great victory of the spirit of the age: but, since the abolition of the order of the Jesuits, Rome had scarcely been thought of; the public had its eye on the court rather than on the church, and paid little heed to the incidents of form, in its ardent curiosity thoroughly to investigate this astounding affair. In whatever manner the question might be put judicially, the public put it unhesitatingly between Rohan and Marie-Antoinette. The point in question was, to know whether the cardinal grand almoner had been guilty of a colossal swindling transaction; whether he had been the imbecile dupe of a female swindler (Madame de La Motte); or, lastly, whether he had really purchased the necklace secretly for the Queen, and by her orders, without the knowledge of the King. The readiness with which a multitude of people accepted the last of the three solutions, and drew the strangest inferences from it, may be judged

Digitized by Google

from the renown which numerous inconsistencies and ten years of defamation had given Marie-Antoinette. The Queen's personal hatred of the cardinal — a hatred which dated back to the epoch when she was the dauphiness, and he the ambassador to Austria[1] — was nevertheless well known: but it was thought that this hatred might have yielded to the repentance of Rohan, and to the passion which he had affected for Marie-Antoinette; and that perhaps Madame de La Motte had really been the secret medium between the Queen and the cardinal. The documentary evidence in the suit proved that Rohan had in good faith believed himself in correspondence with the Queen through Madame de La Motte, and commissioned by her to purchase the necklace as a pledge of reconciliation.

The affair was brought to light through the jewellers, who, anxious at receiving no money, addressed themselves directly to Marie-Antoinette for payment. The Queen was at first stupefied, then exasperated: she complained to Louis XVI.; and her violence would have proved to unprejudiced minds that her sentiments had not changed with respect to Rohan, and that she was not his accomplice. The Baron de Breteuil, the minister of the King's household,[2] an implacable enemy of Rohan through diplomatic rivalry, and the Abbé de Vermont, the ex-preceptor and confidential counsellor of Marie-Antoinette; a preceptor who had taught her nothing, and a counsellor who never gave her any but pernicious advice; the true Maurepas of Marie-Antoinette, as selfish and less sagacious than the fatal minister of Louis XVI., — Breteuil and Vermont, we say, also incited the Queen, and, through her, persuaded the King to apply the torch to that mine laid under the throne, which should have been stifled at any price. Feeble and disreputable governments can only prolong their existence by silence and obscurity. Nothing short of madness could have induced the government to open the sanctuary of the royal family to the transparent reticence of a judicial discussion and the malevolent comments of the populace, like the equivocal interior of a house of ill-fame; and to put the honor of the crown at the discretion of the parliament, a body lately thrown down, then raised up

[1] The ambassador to Vienna in 1772, at the time of the partition of Poland (Rohan), well seconded, or rather directed, by his secretary, the ex-Jesuit Georgel, a man of wit and intrigue, had apprised his government of all that was about to be done, and had acquitted himself with considerable distinction in his functions; but he had gained the hatred of Maria Theresa and Marie-Antoinette by intercepted letters, in which he spoke unfavorably of the young dauphiness.

[2] He had succeeded Amelot in the autumn of 1783.

Digitized by Google

conditionally by royalty, and more irritated at the outrage than grateful for the reparation.

This unhappy government committed one mistake after another. A few weeks after throwing itself into the hands of the parliament, it quarrelled with the latter on account of a third loan sent by Calonne for registration. The point in question was eighty millions of life-*rentes*, redeemable in ten years, and assigned on the aids and the salt-taxes; a last assistance, said the preamble of the edict, which would suffice "to effect the buying-up of the whole debt, and to reëstablish order in affairs." Such assertions awakened pity instead of delusion. The parliament unanimously entreated the King to withdraw the edict. The King replied by an express command to register it. The registration was made, but with modifications and explanations by which the parliament exonerated itself from the responsibility before the public. The parliament was summoned to Versailles, and the unqualified registration was enforced in a bed of justice (December 23, 1785). During the parleys which had preceded this authoritative measure, Calonne had personally estranged the first president, D'Aligre, and the most influential leaders of the company. The reaction was felt in the trial of the Cardinal de Rohan.

The *suit of the Necklace* was prolonged for nine whole months, without wearying the public expectation or curiosity. The injudicious implacableness employed by the confidential friends of the Queen, especially the minister Breteuil, in prosecuting the cardinal alone, and seeking to leave Madame de La Motte out of the discussion, finally turned public opinion in an inverse direction. Men forgot the just contempt long inflicted on this prelate, sunk in debauchery and burdened with debt, who could not understand, to use his own words, *how a gallant man could live on an income of twelve hundred thousand livres*, and who, in consequence, made up the deficiency of his revenue from his ecclesiastical dignities[1] from the funds of the grand almonry, paying his mistresses with the money designed for the relief of the poor. Instead of being indignant, they contented themselves with laughing at the effrontery of the Ex-Jesuit Georgel, the vicar-general of the grand almonry and the confidant of Rohan, who commenced a pastoral letter for Lent with the words, "Dearly beloved brethren, sent to you like the disciple Timothy to the people, whom Paul in his bonds could no longer teach," etc. What a Timothy, and what a Paul! . . . There was as little modesty on one side as on

[1] The bishopric of Strasburg alone yielded him four hundred thousand francs.

Digitized by Google

the other; on that of Breteuil as on that of the Rohans, who had sided with their relative, and who drew with them one of the branches of the royal house, the Condés, allied to the Rohans by the marriage of the Prince de Condé to a member of this family. These illustrious relatives of the accused, the princes and princesses of the houses of Condé and Rohan, according to the usages of criminal trials, ranged themselves in a line, clad in mourning, to salute the *gentlemen of the Great Chamber* on their way to the palace on the days when the court was in session, and "princes of the blood openly canvassed against the Queen of France."[1] The secret intrigues did still more than the public canvassing.

The decision was finally rendered May 31, 1786. The conclusions of the attorney-general, Joli de Fleuri, were that the cardinal should be bound, first, to declare to the chamber assembled that he had rashly meddled in the affair of the necklace, under the name of the Queen, and that he had more rashly believed in a nocturnal rendezvous given him by the Queen,[2] and to ask pardon of the King and Queen in the presence of the court; second, to resign the office of grand almoner; third, to abstain from approaching within a certain distance from the place where the court should be held, etc. These conclusions, too reasonable, at least with respect to the first points, could neither satisfy those who desired that Rohan should be condemned for robbery, nor those who aimed at stigmatizing the Queen by *honorably* acquitting Rohan from all the charges against him. The latter party prevailed! By a majority of five votes, the cardinal was unqualifiedly acquitted; while the Countess de La Motte and her husband, who had grossly duped Rohan, and carried on the whole negotiation concerning the necklace for the purpose of purloining the diamonds, were condemned to be whipped and branded, then to be sent, the wife to the Salpêtrière, and the husband to the galleys.

The parliament cruelly avenged its affront of 1771. The great powers of the ancient régime slew each other. The populace welcomed with delirious joy the decree which humiliated and degraded the throne: an ovation was given to the cardinal, and

[1] *Mém. Madame de Campan*, t. II. p. 286. Such at least is the story of Madame Campan. The Memoirs of Bachaumont (t. XXXII. p. 86) do not mention the presence of the Condés at the Palais.

[2] A rendezvous for a moment, in a thicket of Versailles, in which a woman who strongly resembled the Queen, posted by Madame de La Motte, played the part of Marie-Antoinette.

Digitized by Google

another to the celebrated thaumaturgist Cagliostro, who had been implicated in the suit through his intimacy with Rohan, and acquitted like him.[1] The Queen, transported with anger and indignation, caused Rohan to be exiled, by *lettre de cachet*, to the recesses of Auvergne; a trifling reprisal for a defeat which presaged so many others to royalty!

We have been unable to enter into the details of this long and confused affair. The impression that we receive from it is the impossibility of the Queen's guilt; but the more improbable were the imputations against her, the more characteristic was the credit accorded to these imputations, and the more it attested the moral ruin of the monarchy. The shadow of the Parc-aux-Cerfs still brooded over Versailles; and the terrible night of the 5th of October was destined subsequently to show that neither had the spectres of the Pact of Famine ceased to hover over the palaces of the kings.

A journey made by Louis XVI. to Normandy a few days after the conclusion of the fatal suit offered some compensation to the humiliated monarch. He was warmly received by the Norman population. The enterprise of Cherbourg, the worthy crowning work of the American War, was justly popular in the West; and there was a genuine burst of enthusiasm when the King, in the presence of the squadron and the multitude crowded in the shore-boats, on the strand, and on the immense granite amphitheatre which overlooks the shore, took his stand on one of the famous cones of M. de Cessac, already submerged in the open ocean, to witness the arrival and submersion of another of these cones, designed to form the dike.[2] Louis XVI. was recompensed at this moment for his zeal for the progress of the French marine: it was perhaps the only department in which he was truly the head of the State (the end of June, 1786).[3]

[1] *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 326; *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXII. pp. 85–91. The documents of the trial have been collected in two volumes 12mo; Paris, 1786.

[2] These were enormous basket frames, laden with stones. The frame was destroyed by the waves; but the stones remained as the foundation for the rock-work that was built up with masonry, and blocks of granite. This immense enterprise, suspended at times during our political storms, but always resumed with new ardor, has at length been finished after more than sixty years. Interesting details may be found in the Memoirs of Dumouriez, the commandant of Cherbourg from 1778 to 1788, t. I. ch. v.

[3] A series of ordinances on the marine had just improved the régime of classes, and suppressed the company of the marine guards, the nucleus of so many abuses, and of so fatal a spirit of fraternity, and had replaced it by pupils of the naval school, January 1, 1786.—*Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 123.

Digitized by Google

These were his last bright days. A sad revelation awaited his return to Versailles. Calonne was at the end of his financial orgy. During the parleys with the parliament for the last loan of eighty millions (in December, 1785), and while waiting for the opening of this loan, Calonne had secretly negotiated *rentes* to the amount of nearly one hundred millions on the loans of 1781 and 1782, which were already full, and thus obtained one hundred and twenty-three millions. Such a resource could not be repeated. The third twentieth was about to expire at the close of 1786, and to diminish the revenue twenty-one millions more. The parliament was not disposed to lend itself to the extension of this tax, and the disposition of the public mind rendered an authoritative measure very uncertain. Credit was expiring.[1] The resources of charlatanism were exhausted: the last expedients to which it was possible to have recourse could not insure the working of the governmental machinery beyond a few months. The car must inevitably stop, and be broken by the shock. To save it by the route of the Cardinal Dubois and the Abbé Terrai was no longer possible: the government was no longer strong enough for bankruptcy; and justice demands the admission, that Louis XVI., even if he had had the strength for this, would not have had the will.

Calonne determined to confess the real situation, first to Vergennes, then to the King.

Since the dismissal of Turgot, that is to say, within ten years, the government had expended sixteen hundred millions of extraordinaries, thirteen hundred and thirty-eight millions of which had been obtained by means of loans on *rentes*,[2] and the rest by advances and the creation of offices. During the three years of Calonne's administration, in time of peace, the annual deficit had increased thirty-five millions; although the public revenues had increased one hundred and forty millions since the administration of Turgot, partly by the natural increase of the receipts, and partly by new taxes, and additions to the old ones. France paid

[1] The assignments on the public revenues were negotiated with difficulty at from nine to ten per cent discount.

[2] Four hundred and forty millions under Necker, from 1776 to 1781; four hundred and eleven millions under Joli de Fleuri and D'Ormesson, from 1781 to 1783; and four hundred and eighty-seven millions in the midst of peace under Calonne, from 1783 to 1786. In these four hundred and eighty-seven millions is included a loan of thirty millions contracted by the city of Paris on the King's account, in September, 1786. Calonne had besides forestalled the revenues to the amount of seventy-nine millions.

Digitized by Google

the crown and the privileged orders about eight hundred and eighty millions a year in taxes of all kinds, the *corvées* included, without counting a great part of the feudal rights, which we have no means of estimating.[1] Of these eight hundred and eighty millions, five hundred and ten were levied in the name of the King, instead of the three hundred and seventy that were levied in the time of Turgot: but, deducting seventy-six millions for the expenses of the collection by the government, two hundred and twenty-four for *rentes*, salaries, and interests on securities and other preferred debts, and twenty-seven for the part of the pensions assigned directly on the treasury, there remained but one hundred and eighty-three millions for the expenses of the State; and three-fourths of this trifling remnant of so many tributes would be swallowed up in the gulf of the royal orders on the treasury.[2]

Calonne commenced, therefore, by disclosing to the King some clouds in the horizon. He acknowledged, in general terms, a former deficit, not mentioned in the *Official Report* of Necker, and which he himself had been compelled to increase; then in a written memorial, after calling to mind the *frightful situation of the finances* at the epoch when the King intrusted them to him, and the success of his first efforts to retrieve them, he openly declared that "the present moment concealed a terrible embarrassment under the show of the happiest tranquillity, and that France was only sustained by a kind of artifice. It is necessary," he says, "speedily to resolve on a course that will decide the fate of the State. There exists an annual deficit of one hundred millions.[3] It is impossible to fill up so prodigious a gulf except by extraordinary means. These means should not increase the weight of the taxes, which must even be diminished. The plan which I have formed," he adds, "appears to me the only one that can solve so difficult a problem. I dare believe that none vaster, or more worthy to render your reign illustrious, and to secure the prosperity of your empire, has been conceived. . . . It will be, perhaps, the work of six months, or a year at most."[4]

The plan announced in such pompous terms was presented to the King, August 20, 1786. Without admitting that Calonne

[1] Bailli, in 1830, estimates these eight hundred and eighty millions in 1786 at more than twelve hundred millions: at the present time, they might be estimated, perhaps, at fifteen or sixteen hundred millions.

[2] Bailli, t. II. pp. 263–266.

[3] He said afterwards, one hundred and fourteen.

[4] See the Memorial, ap. Soulavie, t. VI. p. 117.

Digitized by Google

had profoundly planned three years in advance, and had filled up the measure of the evil only to render its remedy indispensable, it should at least be acknowledged, that he had, as he said himself, promptly resolved on his course. The idol of the courtiers, the minister of abuses, declared that the only means of safety was "the reformation of every thing vicious that exists in the constitution of the State. . . . It is indispensable to prop the whole edifice in order to prevent its ruin. . . . Sire, success will raise your name above the greatest names of this monarchy, and you will deserve to be called its legislator."

After a picture, which seemed borrowed from Turgot, of the inequality, incoherence, and absence of unity and harmony, which rendered it impossible to govern the kingdom well, Calonne proposed to efface all distinction between the *pays d'État*, the *pays d'élection*, and the provinces governed by a provincial and a mixed administration, and to apply to the whole kingdom a system of provincial administration based upon assemblies of three degrees: first, the parish assembly; secondly, the district assembly; thirdly, the provincial assembly. These assemblies were to make known the wishes of the people concerning the nature of the taxation, and to proceed to levy and apportion the public burdens. The twentieths, the principal weight of which the privileged classes found means of throwing upon the *roturiers*, were to be replaced by a territorial subsidy, levied upon all lands, without excepting any thing, not even the royal domain. This subsidy was to be collected in kind, and was to be progressive according to the quality of the lands, in a proportion rising from a minimum of one-fortieth to a maximum of one-twentieth of the products. To reconcile the privileged classes to the subsidy, they were to be freed from the capitation-tax. The capitation-tax on *roturiers* was to be maintained, as well as the villain-tax, but with a considerable reduction. The *corvée* in kind was to be abolished, but was to be replaced by a pecuniary prestation, regulated at one-sixth of the villain-tax and the capitation-tax of those not of noble birth, and consequently paid by the *roturiers* alone. The internal customs were to be abolished; the frontier customs were to be replaced by a tariff arranged with a view to the interest of politics and manufactures; the abuses in trade-masterships were to be corrected; the taxes and duties which shackled manufactures, maritime commerce, and the sea-fishery, were to be suppressed; the tyrannical form of the salt-tax, in the provinces where it was farmed out, was to be alleviated, and the price of

Digitized by Google

salt diminished; the grain-trade was to be free, with the reservation of the right of suspending exportation whenever the provincial assemblies should demand it; the stamp and registry duties were to be converted into a single and higher stamp-duty, applicable to all persons, and extended to objects hitherto exempt. All the domains of the crown were to be sold by right of enfeoffment, and the price of their sale was to coöperate in the extinction of the public debt. The sinking fund was to be maintained, extending the redemption over a greater number of years. The annual expenditure was to be diminished twenty millions by retrenchment in all the departments and in the King's household.

By this transformation of the fiscal system, the existing taxes, according to Calonne, would be decreased thirty millions a year, without including the twenty-one millions from the third twentieth, the collection of which was about to cease; and the balance between the ordinary resources and the ordinary expenditures would be reëstablished *in one year* by an increase of one hundred and fifteen millions in the revenues.[1]

After deceiving others, Calonne deluded himself. This project, formed of shreds purloined from all his predecessors, — Turgot, Necker, Machault, Silhouette, and even Colbert and Vauban, — however extended it might have been, was no longer sufficient as a political reform, and could not produce, as a financial reform, the immediate results promised by Calonne. On one hand, nothing short of the radical abolition of privileges with respect to taxes was longer capable of satisfying public opinion; on the other, the classification of estates, the basis of the progressive taxation which the comptroller-general wished to establish, would necessarily require much more than a year of preparatory labor; and the payment in kind, the least practical of Vauban's ideas, and become still less practicable since his time by the increase of social complications, would have involved costs and non-values which it was impossible to calculate before the experiment. The calculations of Calonne were, therefore, wholly arbitrary. His plan was bold, since it openly attacked the immunities of the clergy, and launched the State in the domain of the unknown; but it was not bold enough to succeed, supposing success to have been possible.[2]

[1] *Précis d'un plan pour l'amélioration des finances, présenté au roi le 20 août, 1786, par M. de Calonne.* — See the analysis in Bailli, t. II. p. 267; Droz, t. I. p. 461.

[2] M. Droz (t. I. p. 463) thinks that Calonne's reforms might have "founded the prosperity of the kingdom." We believe that this estimable historian, who has very

Digitized by Google

Vergennes, consulted by Calonne, in order to soften in advance his adverse influence on the King, bowed his head before the appalling figures presented by the comptroller-general. Louis XVI. said with astonishment, "But this is pure Neckerism which you are giving me!" — "Sire," was the reply, "in the state of things, I can give you nothing better."

The logical response of the King would have been to dismiss Calonne, and to recall Necker. The idea of this did not enter Louis' mind; and Calonne, parodying Turgot, made the King promise him a steadfast support in the great things which he was about to undertake to save the monarchy.

It was necessary to insure against surprise from any external embarrassment during this vast operation. The death of Frederick the Great, who had just expired, after filling Europe with his name and influence for half a century (August 17, 1786),[1] and the inconsistent character of his successor, Frederick William II., might give rise to unforeseen complications. Vergennes did his best to provide for the necessities pointed out by his financial colleague. By an article of the treaty of 1783, the governments of France and England were pledged to conclude a commercial treaty. During three years, Vergennes had evaded the execution of this article: he hastened its conclusion in order to bind the interests of England to the preservation of peace, and the treaty was signed September 26.

The success was complete as to the end which we have just indicated: the interests of England were secured to the maintenance of peace. It remains to be known whether the interests of France received the same satisfaction.

The commercial treaty contained some general stipulations worthy of praise. In case of war between the two nations, the merchants could reside at liberty within the respective States, or at least have a year's delay to arrange their business. Letters of reprisal, true relics of the *private warfare* of the Middle Ages applied to international relations, were abolished. The English renounced their extravagant maxims against the rights of neutrals,

soundly judged the ministries of Turgot and Necker, has been too much carried away by the reaction, nevertheless very moral, against historic fatalism. If there was a time "when the French Revolution might have been prevented and directed," this time had past, in our opinion, at the epoch which our narrative has reached.

[1] His last important act had been the complete civil emancipation of the Jews (July, 1786). Mirabeau, during his visit to Prussia, had had the honor of contributing to this resolution of Frederick by a memorial on the illustrious Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, and on the political reformation of the Jews.

Digitized by Google

and admitted that the flag covers all merchandise that is not contraband of war, and that articles adapted to the construction and rigging of ships are not contraband.

As to the merchandise and produce of the two countries, French wines were assimilated to Portuguese wines, with respect to duties, in England; the duties on vinegar were reduced more than one-half; the duties on brandies were diminished; the olive oil of France was assimilated to that of the most favored nations; millinery, mirrors, and various fancy articles, paid a duty of only twelve per cent. By way of compensation, the duties on woollen and cotton fabrics, and on crockery and earthen ware, were reduced to the same rate of twelve per cent; the duties on hardware, to ten per cent; and those on saddlery, to fifteen per cent. All fabrics of silk, or mixed with silk, continued to be prohibited in England; while none of the principal articles of English manufacture remained interdicted in France.

The consequences, necessarily, were complex. During the year that followed the treaty, the bureau of foreign affairs was constantly in the receipt of letters of thanks from Guienne and Languedoc, and letters of complaint fron Picardy and Normandy.[1] The proprietors of vineyards and olive plantations, and the manufacturers of articles of taste at Paris, were jubilant; while the manufacturers struggled laboriously, or closed their shops. Upon the whole, England exported to France twice as much merchandise as she received therefrom. It has been affirmed that the spirit of emulation would have speedily revived our manufactures. This is very doubtful. Not only would the superiority of the capital accumulated in English manufactures have enabled our rivals to make great sacrifices in order to crush out competition, but the application of steam to the arts and manufactures, as a universal motive-power, by Watt and Arkwright, was speedily to decuple, and even to centuple, the productive force of England; and, had not the commercial treaty been broken by the Revolution, it is probable, that, before the French manufacturers had been able to appropriate these great innovations, they would have been borne down for a long space of time.[2]

[1] Flassan, t. VII. p. 428.

[2] The discovery of Watt, the successful continuer of our Papin, dates from 1769 in theory, and from 1776 in practice. From 1782, its full importance began to be appreciated. — See the *Éloge historique de J. Watt*, by M. Arago, in the *Annuaire du Bureau des longitudes de* 1839. — See, concerning this treaty, Bailli, t. II. p. 247; Monthion, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 296; Flassan, t. VII. pp. 421–430; *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. XXIV. p. 642, 1843; *De la politique commerciale de Angleterre*, by

Digitized by Google

A few months after, another commercial treaty, which was wholly advantageous, and devoid of economic objections, but which had the political objection of being likely to estrange the Turks from us, was concluded with Russia (January, 1787).[1]

Vergennes had averted the perils from without: it now remained for Calonne to devise means for the execution of the reformation within. To secure the coöperation of the parliaments was impossible: the most violent resistance to the diminution of privileges might be expected on their part. To enforce unqualified reformation by repeated beds of justice was too stern a course for this worn-out and feeble government. Calonne deemed it indispensable to appeal to public opinion in an official form, and to seek for the throne a point of support in the nation. The name of the States-General would have terrified the King. Calonne devised a middle course: he reminded the King and Vergennes of the assemblies of Notables, convoked at different epochs, as a kind of great council extraordinary, chosen by the sovereign from the élite of the nation, and whose advice was taken on a definite subject. Vergennes disliked any kind of assemblies; but Calonne succeeded in persuading him that it was the only means of preventing all parliamentary resistance, and of averting the complaints of the clergy against the territorial subsidy. As to Louis XVI., he was fascinated by the idea of imitating Henri IV. after the League, and did not even suspect the dif-

E. Forcade. A very singular debate on the subject of the treaty of 1786 took place in the English parliament. Pitt, at that time minister, and Fox, the leader of the Opposition, both held a language absolutely contrary to the respective policy which they afterwards followed, and which they personified in history. Fox, subsequently so well disposed towards France, opposed all reconciliation between the two nations with extreme violence; and Pitt, who was to be a more implacable enemy to France than his father himself, protested in the most philanthropic and philosophical terms against the prejudice which makes one nation the natural and necessary enemy of another, which was, according to him, *to calumniate human nature.* It is is true that he explained his philanthropy by demonstrating that the advantage of this new friendship would be wholly in favor of England. As to Fox, he was not completely inconsistent: it was the monarchy of Louis XIV. that he hated in France, and the Revolution that he loved.

[1] This treaty was analogous to that which England had with Russia, the renewal of which was prevented by the compact between Russia and France. The latter treated each other reciprocally on the footing of the most favored nations. The duties on the merchandise of the two countries were greatly reduced on both sides. The right of *aubaine* was abolished. The rights of neutrals were proclaimed anew, on the terms upon which they had just been recognized by England herself; with the addition of the clause, that vessels under escort could not be subjected to search. In consequence of this compact, Marseilles established fruitful relations with the Black Sea, where the Russians had not yet adopted an exclusive and prohibitory system. The war of the Revolution soon interrupted these relations. — See Flassan, t. VII. pp. 430–439.

Digitized by Google

ference that existed between a victorious hero ending a revolution, and a feeble prince about to open one infinitely vaster and more profound. None of the three personages who decided upon the convocation of the NOTABLES comprehended that this assembly, having no representative character, would be absolutely without authority as to what was expected from it; that, as soon as they entered upon assemblies, the Notables were only calculated to serve as an ante-chamber to the States-General; and that, if the States-General had become inevitable, not a day, not an hour, should be lost in convoking them. Each hour lost made the abyss deeper.

A man more clear-sighted than the King and the two ministers had suggested to Calonne both the idea and the plan of the convocation of the Notables, if his correspondence is to be believed; but Mirabeau was quite sure that this convocation would closely precede that of the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.[1]

The memorial on the plan and the form of the Notables was presented to the King by Calonne about December 15. The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, had alone been taken into the secret after Vergennes. The Queen herself knew nothing of it till the day when the plan was communicated to the council, and the ordinance of convocation decreed (December 29). Marie-Antoinette preserved a lively spite towards Calonne for this. In the comptroller-general's memorial to the King is observed the following sentence: "The succession of time and the revolution of events seem to have brought about the moment when the monarchy, long agitated, has finally attained the point of *tranquillity* and *maturity* which permits it to improve its constitution."[2] . . . The poor King had been so much fascinated with the fine phrases of the minister, that he wrote to him, the morning after the session of the council, "I have been unable to sleep all night; but it was for pleasure!" The innocence of the King and the fatuity of the minister ended in the same insane confidence.

The Notables were convoked at Versailles, to assemble January 29, 1787. They numbered one hundred and forty-four, seven

[1] *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. pp. 339–340. His father, the aged physiocrat, judged the Notables very well in his fashion. "This man (Calonne) assembles a flock of *billies*, orders them to take the bull by the horns, and says to them, 'Gentlemen, we take every thing, and more too; we eat every thing, and more too: we wish to devise means of obtaining this *more too* from the rich, whose money has nothing in common with that of the poor; and we warn you that you are the rich. Now give us your advice as to the manner.'"—*Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. p. 492.

[2] See the Memorial in Soulavie, t. VI. p. 30. It was wished to do something while waiting for the Notables; and, November 6, a decree of the council prescribed the trial for three years of a plan for the conversion of the *corvée* into a pecuniary prestation.

Digitized by Google

of whom were princes of the blood; fourteen archbishops and bishops; thirty-six dukes and peers, marshals of France, and gentlemen; twelve counsellors of State, and masters of requests; thirty-eight first presidents, attorney-generals, and other magistrates of the sovereign courts; twelve deputies from the *pays d'États*, four of whom were from the clergy, six from the nobility, and two from the Third Estate; and twenty-five municipal officers. The true Third Estate, the great body of the non-privileged persons, was only represented, in these hundred and forty-four Notables, by six or seven municipals: all the rest were nobles, or had the privileges of nobility. Among the persons convoked, several prelates and gentlemen, indeed, were known for their philosophical and reformatory opinions. Among the noble names shone that of La Fayette; but one must have been strongly inclined to illusions to believe that the sentiments of La Fayette could be those of the majority. All of these privileged personages piqued themselves on being enlightened men: the greater part would have conceded in theory almost all that was demanded by the spirit of the age; but, in practice, very few were disposed to sacrifice their privileges.

However this may be, it was an extraordinary political assembly in a country which had witnessed none for a century and a half.[1] Men felt, that, if this was not a solution, it was a beginning. Thence proceeded the alarm of the court, and the restless expectation of the public. The courtiers, suddenly awakened from the smiling dream in which they had been lulled by a too seductive enchanter, beheld with stupefaction and anger the hand raised to strike that had lavished so many caresses on them. The aged Marshal de Richelieu, that centenary personification of all the vices of despotism, asked what penalty Louis XIV. would have inflicted on a minister who should have proposed to him to assemble the Notables. The young Viscount de Ségur said, "*The King has given in his resignation.*" The public hoped in proportion to the dismay of the court: it had no more confidence in the firmness of the King than in the morality of the minister: it strongly suspected that Calonne appealed to the phantom of a national representation, only because he was at the end of his resources, and that he merely wished to obtain money; but it comprehended this,—*Versailles is falling*, *France is rising*. A characteristic incident occurred: The government had sent to the *Journal de*

[1] Since the Notables of 1626, under Richelieu.

Digitized by Google

Paris[1] a note announcing the convocation of the Notables. "The nation," said this note, "will see with transport that its sovereign *deigns* to approach it." This servile expression produced so disturbing an effect, that the government caused it to be suppressed in another journal (the *Petites-Affiches*).[2]

Calonne, enamoured of himself, had not the least instinct of the real situation. He counted on being welcomed with acclamations by the Notables and the nation. He celebrated his certain triumph in advance by plunging into every kind of pleasure. The day of the assembly drew near, and nothing was ready: he attempted to repair his indolence by forced labor; fell ill; and, from one delay to another, three weeks elapsed between the day fixed by the letters of convocation and the effective opening of the assembly. This was much worse for the comptroller-general than the loss of time. The opposition had full leisure to reconnoitre the position, and to organize. The men of the most advanced opinions were not those from whom Calonne had the most to fear; at least, in the beginning. La Fayette was by no means hostile in disposition: he was disposed to accept whatever might be proposed that was reasonable, and even to consent to loans, and to vote some provisional taxes. He did not aim at enforcing the immediate convocation of the States-General, but only at obliging the King, before giving him aid, to recognize *certain constitutional principles*. At present, to establish provincial assemblies, to abolish the shackles on commerce, and to restore a civil status to Protestants; and, in a near-approaching future, to arrive at a national assembly, — such were, at the beginning of 1787, the very moderate wishes of the friend of Washington.[3] The most dangerous adversaries of Calonne were neither the men who desired more than he, nor those who desired less, or desired nothing at all: they were those who desired the same things, but who wished to do them in his place. Perfidious as he had formerly been to La Chalotais, Calonne, on this occasion, showed an unsuspicious trust: perfidy and unsuspiciousness proceeded in him from the same cause, — inconsistency. He should have known that a man important through position, and formidable through the spirit of intrigue, — the Archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, — had long aspired to the ministry; yet not only had he caused Brienne to be summoned to the assembly, which was

1 The first *daily* sheet published in France; established in 1777.
2 *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXIII. p. 313; XXXIV. p. 1.
3 *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. pp. 167–198.

Digitized by Google

unavoidable, but had suffered him to surround himself with the personages most disposed to serve him as auxiliaries. He thus paved the way for a coalition between the men who rejected all reform and those who rejected reform from the hands of Calonne. The nobles, devoid of the spirit of fraternity, if not of the spirit of caste, had not intrigued in advance; but the members of the two great bodies of the clergy and the magistracy had agreed to act in concert, in the majority.

They did not lack grievances! At the very moment that the Notables assembled, Calonne consummated the annihilation of credit. He forced the stockholders of the Bank of Discount to *entreat* the King to *permit* them to pay in a security of EIGHTY MILLIONS, as a new guarantee offered to the public! Calonne had the *moderation* to accept only seventy millions. This enormous disbursement, which attests the great growth which the bank had attained, but which drained it dry, was followed by a general panic, which, from the stock of the bank, extended to all the paper in circulation. This was a fine inauguration of the Notables!

The death of Vergennes (February 13, 1787), after an illness aggravated by anxiety, also contributed to weaken the government, ready to fall. This minister, in default of great capacities, had many second-class qualities, and that respect which is obtained by circumspect characters in a long exercise of power. Vergennes was replaced by the Count de Montmorin, an honest man, but entirely inferior to the situation.

The King opened the assembly, February 22, in the Hôtel des Menus, at Versailles. The cry of "*Long live the Queen!*" had long since ceased: this time there was not a single cry of "*Long live the King!*" from the immense multitude that thronged to witness the passing of the cortége.[1]

The King briefly informed the Notables that he desired their counsel on great and important projects for the purpose of "ameliorating the revenues of the State, insuring their entire liberation by a more general apportionment of the taxes, freeing commerce from the shackles which obstructed transit, and relieving, as far as circumstances permitted, the most indigent portion of his subjects." The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, delivered a somewhat bombastic harangue: after which, Calonne, in a cavalier tone, entered upon a long speech, from which he expected a prodigious effect; a brilliant, witty, and injudicious discourse, which offended the audience from the first sentence: —

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXIV. p. 207.

Digitized by Google

"Gentlemen, I am the more honored by what is commanded of me at this moment, inasmuch as the views and the motives, a summary of which the King charges me to present to you, have become entirely his own."

To signify from the beginning, to the assembly, that the views of the minister were entirely those of the King, was, in some sort, to close the discussion in advance.

Calonne continued by the triumphant panegyric of his administration. He extolled himself for every virtue, even that of economy; only this was not a harsh, severe, and parsimonious economy, like that of M. Necker, — whom he designated clearly enough without naming him, — but a broad economy, with a smiling visage and pleasing exterior, which did more than the other, while showing itself less. After this brilliant picture, he was nevertheless forced to confess that the knowledge which had been obtained of the real state of the finances, owing to the admirable order which the minister had established therein, presented nothing satisfactory, and that the annual deficit was considerable. This had existed for centuries: the receipts had never equalled the expenditures under Louis XV. The deficit, which had increased to more than seventy-four millions before the Abbé Terrai, still amounted to thirty-seven millions when M. Necker took the direction of the finances: it had necessarily increased under M. Necker, on account of the war; and had amounted to eighty millions at the close of 1783, independent of a floating debt of six hundred millions. It had also since increased; Calonne did not say how much. "It is impossible," he added, "to leave the State in the unceasingly imminent danger to which it is exposed by such a deficit as that which exists; it is impossible to continue to have recourse every year to palliatives and expedients, which, by retarding the crisis, can only render it the more fatal. We cannot always borrow; we can no longer increase the taxes; we can forestall no more; and to economize would not suffice. What remains to supply all that is lacking, and to procure all that is needed for the restoration of the finances?

"*The abuses!* — yes, gentlemen, in the abuses themselves is found a source of wealth which the State has a right to reclaim, and which should serve to reëstablish order. . . . The abuses are defended by interest, credit, fortune, and *antique prejudices* which time seems to have respected; but what can their vain consideration avail against the public good and the necessities of the State? The abuses which it is now in question to annihilate for the public

Digitized by Google

safety are the most considerable, the best protected, — those which have the deepest roots and the most wide-spread branches. . . . Such are those which weigh upon the productive and laborious class; the abuses of pecuniary privileges, the exceptions to the common law; . . . the general inequality in the apportionment of the subsidies, and the enormous disproportion which is found between the taxes of the different provinces and between the burdens of the subjects of the same sovereign, etc. If so many abuses, *the subjects of eternal censure*, have resisted until now the proscription of public opinion, and the efforts attempted by administrators to remedy them, it has been because men have sought to effect by partial operations what could only succeed by a general operation. The views which the King desires to communicate to you, all tend to this end: they are neither a new system nor a new invention, but the summary, and, so to speak, the rallying-together, of the projects of public utility conceived for a long time past by the ablest statesmen."

He then explained why it had been impossible at previous epochs to arrive at this system of uniformity, this unity of the kingdom, which the time had come to establish. In this picture of the past, he styled the reign of Louis XIV. "that brilliant reign, in which the State was impoverished by victories, *while the kingdom was depopulated by intolerance*."

After condemning the system of privileges on which ancient society reposed, the organ of the crown condemned the Catholic system, the maintenance of which Louis XVI. had nevertheless sworn at his coronation, in the oath to exterminate heretics. This striking disavowal of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes attested that the government was resolved to repair, at least in part, the great iniquity of 1685. The design was fixed, indeed, to restore a civil status to the Protestants, and to replace tolerance in fact, by the recognition of their rights.[1] The parliament had taken the lead as early as the close of 1778, and had resolved upon the presentation of a request to the King for the authentication of marriages, births, and deaths of non-Catholics. Louis XVI., through the influence of the clergy, had prevented the *Company* from carrying out this resolution, which he approved at heart: but, since that time, public opinion had become so imperative that it could no longer be disregarded; and the parliament had

[1] For more than twenty years, the parliaments had established the custom in jurisprudence of declaring *non-admissible* whatever attacked the legitimacy of children born of Protestant marriages.

Digitized by Google

just promulgated, February 2, 1787, the request resolved upon in December, 1778, in order to deprive the ministry of the honor of the initiative.[1]

Calonne terminated his harangue by announcing the establishment of assemblies of three degrees, commissioned to apportion the public burdens in the provinces which had no Provincial Estates;[2] the substitution for the twentieths of a territorial impost, including ecclesiastical property; the suppression of the capitation-tax with respect to the members of the first orders; and the various other measures which we have already mentioned in analyzing the plan of the comptroller-general.

The importance of this session and of the speech of Calonne was incalculable. The frivolous personality of the man rendered the gravity of the facts so much the more striking. He seemed like one of those vulgar Pythonesses, the sport of the internal god, who at times uttered fateful words without wishing or comprehending them. From this day commenced the REVOLUTION. The death-sentence of the ancient régime was signified to it by the very power that was at the head of this régime. A return was no longer possible.

The impression on the Notables was very different from what Calonne had hoped. The men of the past were as much irritated as dismayed. The partisans of progress were in no wise satisfied. This braggart tone, these shameless vaunts, these forced and incomplete confessions, the absence of probity which was felt in this parody of Turgot, had offended the most conciliatory: no one was disposed to yield without strict guarantees.

The next day (the 23d), in a second session, presided over by *Monsieur* (Louis XVIII.), Calonne expounded in detail the first part of his plan, and read six memorials upon the provincial assemblies, the territorial impost, the redemption of the debts contracted by the clergy for the payment of their gratuitous offerings,[3]

[1] La Fayette had labored very actively since 1785 to prepare for this day of justice: aided by Malesherbes, he had gained over two of the ministers, Castries and Breteuil; and the latter had instigated the work of Ruhlière (*Éclaircissements sur les causes de la Révocation de l'édit de Nantes*), which was, as it were, the preface to the reparative measures. — See *Éclaircissements*, etc., and *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. pp. 121, 180.

[2] We have seen that it was his aim to establish uniformity in this respect, and to abolish the Provincial Estates; but he, as yet, concealed this intention. Whatever concerned the assemblies of three degrees had been suggested to him by the framer of Turgot's great municipal plan himself, Dupont de Nemours, whom he had summoned to his side as chief clerk of finance.

[3] Calonne designed that the clergy should liberate themselves by means of alienations.

Digitized by Google

the villain-tax, the grain-trade, and the *corvée*. He reiterated his words of the day before, and enforced them by dwelling on all the inconsistencies, disorders, and injustice of the fiscal system, almost in the same terms that had been employed by the most aggressive writers. He had burned his ships. He wished to render resistance impossible, and made known from this day his intention of publishing the memorials presented to the Notables.[1]

The assembly had been divided into seven bureaux, presided over by the King's two brothers, the Duke of Orleans,[2] the three princes of the branch of Condé, and the Duke de Penthièvre, the grandson of Louis XIV. and Madame de Montespan.[3] The ministry had decided that each bureau should count as one vote; a very objectionable procedure, which might cause a purely nominal majority to prevail over the real majority. From the opening of the deliberations, the members of the sovereign courts and the deputies of the *pays d'États* signified that they could only give their personal opinion, and that they had no power to pledge their orders or their companies. This was coming directly to the point. The Notables showed themselves, in general, favorably disposed to the establishment of the provincial assemblies, although with very grave restrictions as to the form,[4] and less friendly to the parish and district assemblies; that is, they applauded whatever was advantageous to the aristocratic element in the views of the government. The majority demanded that the presidency of the assemblies should not be given to the seniors or to the largest tax-payers, as was projected by the government, but that the presidents should be chosen exclusively from the privileged orders. It offered, indeed, a concession to the Third Estate by way of compensation; namely, that the representatives of the latter should equal in number those of the first two orders together.[5] The debate grew far more animated when the territorial subsidy was reached. A generous minority loudly approved the attack on the privileges; and the majority dared not openly support them in opposition to public opinion, which it dreaded far

[1] See the two sessions in the *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 180; Paris, Plon, 1847.

[2] Afterwards *Philippe-Égalité*. His father had died November 18, 1785.

[3] The son of the Count de Toulouse.

[4] The majority judged the blending of the orders *unconstitutional*, and contrary to the essence of monarchy.

[5] The privileged classes were far from calculating the importance of this concession. This was the origin of the famous *doubling of the Third Estate*, which was productive of such great consequences in circumstances much more decisive. Two bureaux went so far as to propose that the Third Estate should have two votes out of three.

Digitized by Google

more than the government. The cause of the past had fallen into such disrepute, that it dared no longer avow its existence. The majority, unable to defend itself, assumed the offensive. It put forward the very just proposition, that a new tax should not be voted without knowing exactly the receipts and expenditures, and the extent and nature of the deficit. The sincere partisans of progress approved what they would have asked on their side, and all the bureaux demanded information of the *true statement of the finances*. The eldest of the King's brothers had instigated this demand: he showed himself hostile to Calonne, as he had been to Turgot, to Necker, and to all the reformers; but he was beginning a new part in endeavoring to combine the defence of the privileged interests with an affectation of popularity.[1]

Calonne refused the information demanded. The King, he said, desired the opinion of the Notables on the best means of providing for the necessities of the State, and not on the extent of these necessities, which was sufficiently authenticated in his councils. The bureaux persisted. Calonne endeavored to bend the opposition of Brienne and some other influential prelates, — those who were styled the *administrator* bishops, because they were men of business much more than of religion, and because they had enlightenment, no prejudices, and little more belief. Certain of these orators of the bureaux were disposed to compound with the ideas of the minister, but not with his person. He was repulsed. He addressed himself to a greater number of important men: he induced the King to appoint a meeting of forty-two members of the assembly, six from each bureau, on March 2, at the residence of *Monsieur;* presented them with memoranda of the receipts and expenditures; attacked by figures the accuracy of Necker's Official Report; and acknowledged that the annual deficit had reached one hundred millions, without counting twelve millions necessary to provide for unforeseen necessities.[2] Upon the assertions of the minister, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, M. de Cicé, declared that neither confidence nor credit could revive until France should have been informed by an exact verification whether it was M. Necker or M. de Calonne who had deceived the King, and until justice should have been done to the

[1] See in Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution*, t. II. p. 186, some curious details concerning the dream of the reconstruction of feudalism cherished for some time by *Monsieur*.

[2] He acknowledged shortly afterwards, instead of a hundred and twelve, a hundred and fourteen or fifteen millions.

Digitized by Google

criminal. Calonne having affirmed in the discussion that the King had the right to levy taxes at his pleasure, and that this principle would be contested by no one present, lively murmurs were raised; and the Archbishop of Narbonne, Dillon, strongly protested against the assertion. The Archbishop of Arles, Dulau, doubted whether any other assembly than the States-General had the right to vote taxes. The wit and talent for discussion displayed by Calonne ended only in a complete defeat. The meeting declared itself opposed to the territorial impost, and continued to demand a statement of the financial condition.

The next day, the King notified the bureaux that they were summoned to deliberate, not upon the existence of the territorial tax, which was a thing decided on, but upon its form. The bureaux replied, that, if it was impossible to dispense with the establishment of the tax, it should be collected in money, and not in kind. They insisted more strongly than ever on the statement of the receipts and expenditures, in order to be able to fix the quota, and, if possible, the duration of the impost. They would only permit it as a transient aid. While rejecting in fact, like the rest, equality in taxation, the first bureau, presided over by *Monsieur*, piqued itself on generosity, and refused the exemption from the capitation-tax offered to the privileged classes. All the bureaux demanded the integral maintenance of the rights and privileges of the provinces and the different bodies, thus protesting against the *uniform régime* announced by the minister.[1] Some members continued to oppose the territorial impost, but through motives of a different kind from those of their colleagues. The attorney-general of the parliament of Aix, the old brother-in-arms of La Chalotais in the war against the Jesuits, M. de Castillon, signalized himself by lofty words.

"There is no legal power," he said, "which can authorize the territorial impost as it is proposed; neither this assembly, . . . nor the parliaments, nor the particular States, nor the King himself: the States-General would alone have the right to do this."[2]

A second general session was held, March 12, under the presidency of *Monsieur*. Calonne presented the second part of his

[1] Brittany had been greatly agitated on learning that it was wished to increase the tax on salt in the districts which were not subject to the compulsory salt-tax, and to diminish it in the districts in which the latter existed; and the government had promised that Brittany should pay no more than in the past.

[2] Concerning the discussions of the bureaux, see *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXIV. pp. 215–260; Droz, t. I. p. 482.

Digitized by Google

plan, concerning the freedom of internal transit, the duties relative to commerce, the salt-tax, etc. To abolish the internal customs and the excise duties most injurious to transit, was, as he well said, to respond, after a hundred and seventy-three years, to the States-General of 1614, and to accomplish the work which the great Colbert had been unable to carry through to the end. He destroyed the good effect of these words, however, by new temerity of language. He appeared to wish to persuade the Notables that they and he were agreed. "His Majesty," he said, "has seen with satisfaction that your sentiments, in general, accord with his principles; . . . that the objections which have struck you . . . have chiefly related to forms."

Upon this assertion, a new storm broke forth. All the bureaux protested with virulence against this pretended agreement. They intimated that their opposition was aimed not only at the form, but also at the substance. *Monsieur* declared that "it was neither honest nor decent to make the Notables say what they had not said." The second part of Calonne's plan was torn to pieces like the first. The abolition of the internal customs was too bold; the modifications of the salt-tax were too timid. *Monsieur* desired that the *infernal machine of the salt-tax* should be wholly suppressed, and that a tax should be substituted in its stead. The elder of the King's brothers seemed to take the part of leader of the Opposition, which he appeared more capable of filling than the Duke of Orleans. La Fayette demanded, that, in the law which abrogated the salt-tax, the King should prescribe the liberation of all the unfortunates whom the salt-tax had imprisoned or sent to the galleys (for smuggling). Calonne was personally attacked on account of the scandalous exchanges or purchases of the crown property, in which he had sacrificed the interest of the State. The first president of the Chamber of Accounts, Nicolaï, the author of the denunciation, hesitating to sign it, La Fayette himself assumed the responsibility.

Calonne began to feel that the monarch who had made him the same promises as Turgot and Necker, and who was about to keep them in the same manner, was vacillating beneath his influence. He nevertheless still preserved externally his imperturbable assurance, and, March 29, read in a third general session the third part of his plan for the enfeoffment of the domains and the reformation of the administration of the waters and forests, as if the two preceding parts had been adopted. The next day he issued to the public the memorials comprising the first two parts,

Digitized by Google

preceded by an advertisement to the readers, basing this publication on the necessity "of dispelling the anxiety," he says, "with which some have sought to inspire the PEOPLE. The point in question is, not new taxation, but the suppression of unjust exemptions, and the employment of means tending to relieve the tax-payers in the most straitened circumstances. More will be paid, doubtless; but by whom? By those only who do not pay enough: they will pay what they ought, according to a just proportion, and none will be burdened. Privileges will be sacrificed! Yes, justice wills, and necessity exacts it. Would it be better to overburden the non-privileged, the PEOPLE?"

At the same time, he accused the Notables while affecting to defend them: "It would be wrong for observations dictated by zeal, the expressions of a noble frankness, to give birth to the idea of a malevolent opposition."[1]

This paper, written by the celebrated advocate Gerbier, was widely circulated, and was sent to all the curés *that they might spread it in their parishes*. Nothing of such grave import had hitherto occurred as this despairing appeal of the organ of the crown to popular opinion against the privileged classes. A cry of anger and dismay resounded among the Notables. All the bureaux complained to the King of the *seditious* publication of the comptroller-general. The assembly, the court, and several of the ministers, united for the purpose of overthrowing Calonne. The Queen entered into the league under the influence of her confidential counsellor, the Abbé de Vermont, who was devoted to the Archbishop of Toulouse. Calonne had scarcely a single ally but the giddy Count d'Artois. Public opinion did not respond to his appeal. Although satisfied at seeing him rend asunder every veil, and break down every barrier, it supported even the retrogressive opposition against the wasteful minister, and applauded the Notables for the sole reason that they were a deliberative assembly contending with a minister of absolutism. The time for progress through *enlightened despotism* had passed.[2] Pamphlets rained upon Calonne, passionately repeating that formidable word, *the States-General*, uttered with solemnity in

[1] Bachaumont, t. XXXIV. pp. 343–373; Droz, t. I. p. 496.

[2] A local circumstance contributed to render Paris more unfriendly to Calonne; namely, the erection of the *octroi* walls and the numerous barriers which imprison the capital. Paris, which had extended beyond its old boulevards, was spreading at liberty in the country like London to-day, and was greatly dissatisfied with the enclosure which was imposed on it.

Digitized by Google

some of the bureaux. The paradoxical Linguet, who had lately celebrated pure despotism, and who was soon to preach bankruptcy, invoked the assembly of the Three Estates. "It is outraging the nation," wrote Carra, preluding his career as a revolutionary journalist, "to propose to it, in the absence of the States-General, which belong to its constitution, to consent to reorganize this constitution by *provincial assemblies*, the true quality of which would be that of loan funds at the disposal of the comptroller-general."

A more important adversary, provoked by Calonne, brought a very efficient support to the coalition. This was Necker. Calonne had disputed the *Official Report*. Necker requested the King's permission to discuss its veracity with Calonne in the presence of the Notables. Louis XVI. replied to Necker, that he was satisfied with his services, and that he ordered him to keep silence. Necker was not the man to obey when his renown was in question: he prepared an apologetic memorial, and meanwhile talked and gave notes to the leading members of the assembly. During the interval, Calonne took a fancy to assert that Necker had not left in the treasury, as he pretended, a sum sufficient to complete the payments of 1781, and to begin those of the following year. On the ground of the *Official Report*, Calonne might easily enough have defended himself: here he was absolutely in the wrong. The successor of Necker, the ex-comptroller-general, Joli de Fleuri, interrogated on this point, declared in writing that Necker had told the truth. The keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, who was deeply involved in the league against Calonne, caused Fleuri's letter to reach the King. Calonne, questioned with severity by Louis XVI., adroitly recriminated against the intrigues by which he was assailed, and imputed the opposition of the Notables to the cabals of Miromesnil. Louis turned his ill-humor against the keeper of the seals, and accepted Calonne's proposal to replace Miromesnil by M. de Lamoignon, a president of the parliament of Paris, and the cousin of Malesherbes. Calonne attempted to push his victory to its farthest limits, and likewise to procure the dismissal of Breteuil, the minister of the King's household. Louis did not refuse; but he insisted on informing the Queen, of whom Breteuil was a protégé. The Queen flew into a passion, exclaiming that it was not Breteuil who should be dismissed, but Calonne, who had compromised the King's authority by convening the Notables, and who now neither knew how to restrain nor to persuade them. She stormed,

Digitized by Google

prayed, and wept. The feeble monarch, who had gone to Marie-Antoinette's apartments to give notice of the removal of Breteuil, commissioned Breteuil to carry to Calonne his dismissal; but, in dismissing Calonne, he kept the keeper of the seals whom Calonne had just made (April 8–9).

The plans of Calonne did not vanish with him as the plans of Turgot and Necker had vanished with their authors. It was no longer possible to return to the old routine. Louis XVI. had been made to understand, that, of Calonne's projects, nothing must be suppressed but the author. But who would execute these projects? There were two candidates of importance, that of the Queen and that of public opinion, Brienne and Necker, who still retained his popularity, despite the vigorous attacks which a powerful champion had recently made on his system of loans.[1] The King could endure neither. The new minister of foreign affairs, Montmorin, made a feeble effort in favor of Necker; he failed: and Necker having published his apologetic memorial, without permission, on the very day of the removal of Calonne, the cabal of the Queen took advantage of this disobedience to cause him to be banished twenty leagues from Paris. Marie-Antoinette had wholly forgotten her former friendliness to the Genevese. The Queen's party pushed temporarily into the comptroller-generalship an old counsellor of State of no importance, — M. de Fourqueux; and, April 23, the King went in person to communicate to the Notables the fourth part of Calonne's plan, announcing a saving of fifteen millions, and the extension of the stamp-duty to many articles which had hitherto been exempt, for the purpose of contributing, with the territorial subsidy, to fill up the deficit. The King granted the Notables precedence for the privileged classes in the provincial assemblies, and the complete statement of the financial condition, so urgently demanded.

The Notables showed no more good will on this account, and appeared little disposed to accept the stamp-tax. The financial crisis was becoming aggravated from day to day: all business had ceased, and the treasury was on the eve of suspending payment. It was necessary to hasten to find some firm hand to which to intrust the helm. Montmorin, seconded this time by the keeper of the seals, De Lamoignon, made a second attempt in behalf of Necker. Louis XVI. was about to yield, when Breteuil came to

[1] *Dénonciation de l'agiotage au roi et aux Notables*, by the Count de Mirabeau; 1st *Lettre sur l'administration de M. Necker*, by the same, March, 1787. There are good reasons in these, mingled with exaggeration and injustice.

Digitized by Google

his aid against the other two ministers, and insisted in favor of Brienne. Louis resigned himself to Brienne in order to escape Necker. The Archbishop of Toulouse was appointed chief of the council of finance, and it was understood that the comptroller-general would be merely his chief clerk (May 1). Brienne was another Calonne in morality, with less talent, and with pretensions besides to the character of a great economist. A wholly superficial personage, with nothing at the bottom but vices, and a petty, covetous, and vulgar ambition, he was one of those men, who, with a ready wit and much tact, cause themselves to be judged fit for important places, so long as they have not filled them. He succeeded in binding the Queen to his ministerial destiny as no minister had yet done. Marie-Antoinette governed ostensibly with him, being present thenceforth at all the *committees* held in the King's apartments, and accepting and invoking the formidable responsibility of a part for which she was so little fitted by Nature, and which would crush her with all her friends.

Malesherbes was restored to the council by his relative, Lamoignon, as minister of State, without a department. He was no longer a guarantee or a power, but an additional victim; and, unhappily, the illustrious old man was to compromise in this ministry more than his life,—his glory, which belonged to France!

May 2, Brienne announced to the bureaux that the annual saving would amount to forty millions, instead of fifteen, but that a loan of eighty millions was indispensable. Under the impression of such a promise of reduction in the expenditures, the Notables consented to the loan, which was issued in the form of six millions of life-*rentes*. All the bureaux fell with eager curiosity upon those famous reports of the finances which had finally been given to them. They did not gain much enlightenment thereby. There was such an absence of order, method, and sincerity, in these reports,[1] that it was impossible to disentangle the permanent deficit from the extraordinary and incidental charges, or consequently to agree upon the amount of the real deficit. The greater part estimated it approximately at one hundred and forty millions. The reports for 1788 give us data on this subject which the Notables lacked in 1787, and enable us to perceive that the permanent deficit did not exceed ninety-seven or ninety-eight millions, in-

[1] They were not all given up; for "the King himself sorted those which he was willing to give to the Notables, and those which he was pleased to abstract from them, and which, apparently, contained gifts or malversations." — *Mém. de Besenval*, t. III. p. 226.

Digitized by Google

cluding twelve millions for unforeseen expenses. Calonne, with his thoughtless temerity, had exaggerated it, probably for the purpose of obtaining from the Notables as much money as possible.[1]

Despite the economy announced, Brienne declared to the Notables that the territorial subsidy was necessary, to the amount of eighty millions a year, with the stamp-tax and a new form of the capitation-tax. Long and useless discussions were renewed in the bureaux. The Notables belonging to the privileged orders, that is to say, the immense majority of the assembly, were disturbed by the reproaches which came to them from the provinces. The nobility and the clergy were greatly dissatisfied with the Notables for admitting *equal apportionment* by law, while seeking to elude it in fact. Some remarkable incidents occurred in these discussions. La Fafayette proposed that the King should be entreated to convoke a NATIONAL ASSEMBLY in five years; that is, for 1792. "What, sir!" said the Count d'Artois, the president of the bureau, "do you demand the States-General?" — "Yes, my lord; *and even better than that.*"[2]

La Fayette was not supported. He was more successful in two other motions: one for the civil status of Protestants, — a measure on which the government, as we have said, had already decided; the other for the reformation of the criminal code. It is just to remark, that it was a bishop, M. de La Luzerne, who supported and secured the passage of the motion concerning the Protestants; a fact the newer, and the more worthy of notice, inasmuch as the Bishop of Langres was a devotee, and not a philosopher. M. de La Luzerne went farther, and accepted in advance the liberty of worship, saying that he preferred churches in the towns to sermons in the wilderness.[3] The ancient spirit of St. Martin and of evangelical Christianity reappeared at length to unite with philosophy against persecuting Catholicism.

The Notables, unwilling to take the responsibility, before the provinces, of voting, or even of proposing, taxes, finally declared that they referred it to the wisdom of the King to determine what mode of taxation would have the fewest objections, if it was really indispensable to demand new sacrifices from the nation; that is to say, they tendered their resignation to the King.

[1] See the observations of M. Droz, *Hist. du règne de Louis XVI.*, t. I. pp. 512–514. It must not be forgotten that the extraordinary and floating charges, when not liquidated, ended necessarily in a consolidation which added the interest of these consolidated funds to the permanent deficit.

[2] *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 177.

[3] *Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 178.

Digitized by Google

The closing session took place May 25. Many sounding periods, and much mock praise, were heard concerning the *union of hearts, and the unity of principles*, and on the great results of the assembly. The confidence of Calonne had passed to his successor: there were the same assurances that they were about to emerge from peril; that every thing was ended . . . when every thing was beginning! A few years before, a great effect would have been produced by a sentence such as this:—

"The *corvée* is proscribed; the salt-tax is sentenced; the shackles which have obstructed internal and external commerce will be destroyed; and agriculture, encouraged by the free exportation of grain, will daily become more flourishing."

But things are valued according to times and places: this was what the Bourbons knew not how to comprehend: it was ten years too late!

Brienne ended by protesting that it was the wish of the King to limit the duration of the new taxes, as well as to maintain the forms and prerogatives of the first two orders, which were essential to the monarchy, and which it was important not to confound with the equal apportionment of the tax.[1]

It was not for the profit of royalty that the Notables had resigned their functions, as was speedily to be perceived. The monarchy might, nevertheless, have derived a momentary advantage thereby, and perhaps have gained some time, had Brienne possessed any political discernment. Every one expected a royal session, in which the King would compel the parliament to register as a whole the administrative and financial edicts consented to, in general and indirect terms, by the Notables. There would have been no violent outbreak of public opinion on this account. Brienne had the incredible indiscretion to send the edicts one by one. The first three, on the freedom of the grain-trade, the provincial assemblies, and the abolition of the *corvée*, passed without difficulty (June 17, 22, 27). The stamp act and the territorial subsidy remained. It was fully evident that it was necessary to begin with the one of these two edicts, the principle of which was popular, and which the parliament could only reject by rejecting, in the name of the privileged classes, the basis of equal apportionment; that is, by covering themselves with immense discredit. Brienne did exactly the reverse. He sent the

[1] See whatever concerns this assembly in the collection entitled *Assemblée des Notables*, 1787, two vols. quarto. The general sessions are also found in the *Introduction au Moniteur*.

Digitized by Google

stamp edict first! The parliament, overjoyed at this mistake, felt itself master of the situation. It demanded, after the example of the Notables, that the financial reports should be transmitted to it, in order that it might ascertain the necessities of the treasury before registering the edict (July 6). The ministry refused. In the midst of the stormy deliberation which followed this refusal, a clerical counsellor, Sabatier de Cabre, suddenly exclaimed, "We demand information of the state of the finances (*états*): it is the States-General (*États-Généraux*) that we need!" This pun was transformed into a formal proposition, and the Company decreed that remonstrances should be drawn up by commissioners, for the purpose of entreating the King to withdraw his declaration concerning the stamp-duty, and expressing the wish to see the NATION ASSEMBLED prior to any new taxation (July 16).[1]

The Notables had abdicated in favor of the King: the parliament abdicated in favor of the NATION.

This was the overthrow of all its traditions, jealous as it had hitherto been of the States-General, and desirous of not witnessing their reappearance. On the morrow, it was terrified at the kind of delirium which had seized it. The framers of the remonstrances lessened the scope of the resolution of July 16 by saying that the States-General alone could consent to a *perpetual* tax. The door was thus opened for a compromise with the court. The King made no reply concerning the States, and sent to the parliament the edict establishing the territorial subsidy, and abolishing the two twentieths. Upon this, the parliament demanded the States-General without restriction. "The nation, represented by the States-General, alone has the right to grant the necessary subsidies to the King" (July 30).[2]

The majority, who thought only of intimidating the court, in order to obtain the withdrawal of the territorial subsidy, had been drawn on by two minorities temporarily united: the one, personified in the cold energy of Adrien Duport, one of the future powers of the Constituent Assembly, knew whither it was drifting, — to democratic liberty, to a revolution in which the parliament would disappear, and in which the States-General themselves would be absorbed in the unity of that national assembly lately invoked by La Fayette; the other, guided by the brilliant and giddy imagination of D'Éprémesnil, dreamed of a restoration of the privileged liberties of the Middle Ages, a régime of aristocratic

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXV. p. 334. [2] *Ibid.*, t. XXXV. p. 378.

Digitized by Google

monarchy, in which the three orders would assemble at determined epochs, and, in the intervals of their assemblies, would confide the maintenance of the public rights to the parliament.

The King summoned the parliament to Versailles, and the two edicts were registered in a bed of justice, August 6. Two months before, the bed of justice would have prevented, or at least postponed, the struggle: now it was only an episode of this same struggle. The parliament had hurled a fire-brand which it was no longer in its power to extinguish. On the eve and with the expectation of the bed of justice, it had recorded a protest in advance, in which this scathing sentence is remarked:—

"The parliament, grieved at having been obliged to give its suffrage, within twelve years, on accumulated taxes, the plans presented for which would swell the amount to an increase of more than two hundred millions since the accession of the King to the crown, does not believe itself possessed of sufficient powers to become the guarantee of the execution of the edicts with respect to the people, . . . who see with affright the deplorable consequences of an administration, the excessive malversation of which does not appear to them even possible."[1]

On the day following the bed of justice, the parliament declared the transcription made on its registers illegal and void. The young counsellors stifled, by their numerical superiority, the scruples and apprehensions of the aged magistrates of the Great Chamber. An immense crowd, which filled the Palais and its environs to overflowing, welcomed with acclamations the magistrates who had signalized themselves by their opposition to the court, and their interference in the appeal to the States-General.

A regulation, issued meanwhile, touching the reduction of the expenses of the households of the King and Queen (August 9), in order to begin to fulfil Brienne's promises of economy, irritated the courtiers more than it satisfied the public.[2] "It is frightful," exclaimed the followers of the court, "to live in a country where one is not sure of possessing to-morrow what he has to-day. This is seen nowhere but in Turkey."[3]—"There is little merit," re-

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, t. XXXV. p. 389.

[2] The offices of the chamber and the wardrobe were reduced one-half. The stables and the kennels were united. The gendarmes, the light horsemen, and the door-guards were suppressed; which reduced the cavalry of the King's household to the body-guards. — See *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 416. The Military School was suppressed anew, October 9, 1787.

[3] *Mém. de Besenval*, t. III. p. 256.

Digitized by Google

plied the public, "in abandoning what one can no longer keep, and yielding only to necessity."

The parliament, meanwhile, continued its attack. August 10, Duport denounced, in due form, the *malversations, abuses of authority*, etc., of the ex-comptroller-general, Calonne. The parliament received the denunciation, and charged the attorney-general to proceed with the investigation. The decree was quashed by the council; but Calonne did not trust to it, and fled to England. All the provincial parliaments reiterated the decree of the parliament of Paris. The indictment of Calonne was, in the eyes of the populace, that of the court and the Queen. Pamphlets sprang up on all sides. The attorneys' clerks, in the courts of the Palais, openly lampooned *Madame Deficit*. *Madame Deficit* paved the way for *Madame Veto!* The irritation against Marie-Antoinette reached such a point, that Louis XVI., by the advice of the lieutenant of police, expressly interdicted the Queen to show herself in Paris.[1]

The parliament had postponed until August 13 the deliberation on the means of insuring the execution of its decree of the 7th. The Duke de Nivernais, a peer of France and a minister of State without a department,[2] endeavored to calm the magistrates by representing to them the necessity of showing France united, and the State provided with sufficient resources, at a moment when the affairs of Holland threatened to reopen the war. D'Éprémesnil warmly refuted him; and, by a majority of eighty votes against forty, the Company persisted in its resolutions; declared the edicts of August 6 incapable of depriving the nation of its rights, and of authorizing a collection of taxes *contrary to all principles;* and ordered the present resolution to be sent to all the bailiwicks and seneschalships within its jurisdiction. Cries of enthusiasm welcomed the news of this decision outside. D'Éprémesnil was borne aloft in triumph. The people were ignorant, that, in the preamble of the resolution, the parliament had declared that it was impossible, without violating the original constitution of the nation, to subject the nobility and the clergy to the territorial subsidy, and that these *principles* were those of the States-General. When it was known, little heed was paid to it. An infallible instinct taught the non-privileged masses that the States-General would profit them alone.[3]

[1] Bachaumont, t. XXXV. p. 402.

[2] This was the fabulist, better known as a friend of letters than as a politician.

[3] Bachaumont, t. XXXV. p. 407; Droz, t. II. p. 12.

Digitized by Google

The court replied by exiling the parliament to Troyes (August 15). The King's two brothers were commissioned to cause the edicts to be registered, the one in the Chamber of Accounts, the other in the Court of Aids. *Monsieur*, who was regarded as executing, despite himself, an order which he disapproved, was applauded by the people: the Count d'Artois was hissed and hooted. The Chamber of Accounts and the Court of Aids demanded the recall of the parliament and the convocation of the States-General. The Palais and its suburbs were daily the headquarters of riotous crowds, which gave chase to the *spies of the police*, and manifested the most hostile spirit. The *clubs*, circles for reading and conversation borrowed from England since 1782, disregarded the prohibition to meddle with politics which they had received, and became the hot-beds of an opposition which sustained that of the streets. The ministry closed the clubs. August 27, the parliament, from its place of exile, issued a new resolution more violent than the preceding ones. Two days before, Brienne, under the pretext of the necessity of a concentration of power in the presence of so critical a situation, had caused himself to be appointed prime minister. The Marshals de Ségur and de Castries refused to recognize his supremacy, and tendered their resignations. It was the departure of the military glory of ancient France. Ignominy without came with anarchy within. The government, contending at home with the old corporations, bowed disgracefully before foreign powers.

In the last days of M. de Vergennes, French diplomacy had already lost much ground; nevertheless, it still continued to command respect. It was speedily ruined after him.

Vergennes, by the commercial treaty of 1786, had succeeded in arranging matters in such a manner, that it was not to the interest of England to make war upon us directly; but he had not succeeded in preventing her from doing so everywhere indirectly by diplomacy. At the very moment when Pitt was filling the English galleries with such fair words against international hatred, he was making it his chief care to undermine everywhere the interests and alliances of France. Irritated at the commercial compact of France with Russia, he avenged himself in Turkey. Seconded by the Prussian government, which had fallen completely under his influence since the death of Frederick the Great, he suddenly affected a great zeal for the maintenance of the Ottoman empire, hitherto so utterly abandoned by England to the discretion of the Russians; and urged the Turks to resume the offen-

Digitized by Google

sive, in order that France might lose the commercial alliance of the Russians if she supported the Turks, or see her influence annihilated in the Levant if she did not support them. The Anglo-Prussian agents promised the Divan to arm the King of Sweden, and to rouse the Poles to insurrection against Russia. The Turks, believing themselves menaced by the celebrated journey of Catharine II. to the Crimea, and the interview of the Czarina with the Emperor Joseph II. on the shore of the Black Sea, declared war, therefore, upon the Russians, at a moment when Catharine was not thinking of an immediate or even a speedy attack upon the Porte, and when Joseph II. was more occupied with the disturbances excited in the Austrian Netherlands by his innovations than disposed to fight on the Danube (August, 1787). The French ambassadors vainly endeavored to extinguish the fire kindled in the East by the English.

Other intrigues, meanwhile, more closely assailed France. England, and especially her instrument, Prussia, acted more ostensibly in Holland than in Turkey. The French government had made a great mistake, as Mirabeau well remarks,[1] in not emancipating Holland at the same time with America; that is, in not profiting by the indignation excited by the infamous treachery of the Prince of Orange to secure the abolition of the stadtholdership. The question which the French government had not had the energy to decide during the American War remained pending, since peace, between the unworthy head of the military power, supported by a coalition of the aristocracy and the populace, and the principal magistrates, supported by the enlightened and patriotic portion of the people of the Seven Provinces. The attempts of the stadtholder to cause the massacre of the leaders of the republican party by the mob, and the acts of violence committed by the troops under his command, drove the patriots to extremities. The province of Holland suspended the Prince of Orange from the functions of captain-general. The stadtholder invoked the intervention of the King of Prussia, his wife's brother; and the English ambassador at the Hague blew the fire with all his might. King Frederick William nevertheless hesitated, at first, to put himself in open opposition to France; and an attempt was made at mediation, in common, by France and Prussia. The stadtholder, instigated by his wife, a true demon of pride and wickedness, refused the conditions of accommodation (January, 1787).

[1] *Adresse aux Bataves*, 1788.

Digitized by Google

M. de Vergennes died. He had not had all the vigor desirable: but, after him, affairs were much worse; it may be said, indeed, that there was no longer any French diplomacy. The attitude of Prussia became threatening. The new minister of foreign affairs, Montmorin, proposed to the council to form a camp on the northern frontier, at Givet. Calonne had set apart the necessary funds, when he was dismissed. France fell much lower even than under Calonne! Brienne diverted the funds to other purposes; and not only was no army formed at Givet under the command of Rochambeau or La Fayette, as had been in question, but the Dutch republicans were dissuaded from calling the brother-in-arms of Washington to head their troops, and were induced to take as their general a cowardly German intriguer, the Rhinegrave of Salm, who was only fit to render defence impossible. The feeble Montmorin had neither dared to complain nor to support Ségur and Castries; and history is obliged to confess that the colleague and friend of the great Turgot contributed in the council to prevent France from doing her duty. Energy had never been the distinctive quality of Malesherbes; and, enfeebled by age, he had now no other idea than the fear of disturbances within and war without. There would have been no war had the French arms appeared on the frontier; for England had not decided to commence hostilities, and Prussia did not act until she was quite sure that France would not do so.[1] There would have been no war: there was disgrace. After the resignation of the Marshals de Ségur and de Castries, the catastrophe was not long in coming. The stadtholder and his odious wife, after failing in a new plot to surprise the Hague and slaughter the magistrates, openly called in foreign arms. Twenty-four thousand Prussians, commanded by that same Duke of Brunswick whose glory was destined to suffer shipwreck at Valmy, rapidly penetrated into Holland. The patriots, in consternation at the inaction of France, and betrayed by the Rhinegrave of Salm, who fled instead of defending Utrecht, were unable to offer an effective resistance. The stadtholder returned to the Hague, September 20, 1787. Amsterdam capitulated (October 10), and all Holland was delivered up to the pillage and fury of the victorious faction and its German auxiliaries.

The important treaty of 1785 between France and republican Holland was annulled, in fact, by the new compacts with England

[1] Ségur, *Tableau de l'Europe*, t. I. p. 342; Droz, t. II. p. 28.

Digitized by Google

and Prussia, to which subjugated Holland was forced to submit (January 15, 1788).

"France has just fallen! I doubt whether she rises again!" said the Emperor, Joseph II.[1] She would not, indeed, rise again under the banners of the monarchy. It was under other banners that she would drive before her the standards of the brother of Joseph II. and the nephew of Frederick the Great.

The ignominious *dénoûment* of the affairs of Holland covered the government with general contempt, which was revived by the presence of all those unhappy Dutch patriots, who, compromised and abandoned, came to ask of France a refuge in default of aid.

The agitation caused by the exile of the parliament continued. All the inferior tribunals, and even the bodies foreign to the magistracy, the university for instance, had sent addresses and deputations to Troyes. The provincial parliaments had inveighed loudly, and demanded, one after another, the recall of the parliament of Paris, the convocation of the States-General, and the trial of Calonne. Their language became very menacing. "The continually repeated authoritative measures," said the parliament of Besançon, "the compulsory registrations, the banishments, the constraint and rigor employed in the place of justice, . . . wound a nation idolatrous of its kings, but proud and free; chill hearts; and *may break the bonds which bind the sovereign to the subjects, and the subjects to the sovereign.*" Several parliaments demanded, in the name of the *constitutional laws* of the kingdom, that, instead of organizing provincial assemblies, the ancient Provincial Estates should be reëstablished with much more extended rights, but also with their privileged and unequal form; that is, they claimed the régime of the Three Orders, in opposition to the new system of representation founded on the sole principle of landed property.[2] The parliament of Bordeaux went so far as to forbid the provincial assembly of Limousin to meet. It exceeded the parliament of Paris in boldness: exiled to Libourne, it refused to register the letters of transfer, as illegal.

Affairs, carried so far by the provincial courts, seemed tran-

[1] Flassan, t. VII. p. 456.

[2] The assemblies of the two higher degrees, the election and the province, were not to be representative until after 1791; the King until then appointing one-half of the members, who then chose the complement of their number. — See, as a specimen, the *Règlement sur la formation des assemblées de Champagne*, ap. *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 366, June 23, 1787.

Digitized by Google

quillized at this moment between Versailles and Troyes. The ministry was terrified; the majority of the parliament of Paris was tired of exile, and uneasy as to the consequences. Brienne made advances, which were not repelled by the majority, and which ended in a compromise without logic or dignity. The ministry withdrew the edicts of the stamp-duty and the territorial subsidy, lately proclaimed indispensable to the salvation of the State. The parliament, while declaring that it did not depart from its resolutions, registered the reëstablishment of the two twentieths, to wit, the first indefinitely, and the second until 1792; which twentieths were to be thenceforth collected, "without distinction or exception, from all the revenues which were subject thereto" (September 19, 1787).[1]

The royal power and the parliament both emerged weakened from a contest in which both had been vanquished. Public opinion greeted the recall of the parliament as a victory. The young attorneys' clerks, and the turbulent multitude, who served as their auxiliaries, secured the illumination of the environs of the Palais by breaking the windows of those who refused to obey. Calonne was burned in effigy on the Place Dauphine; and other manikins, representing the minister Breteuil, and the Queen's friend, the Duchess de Polignac, were carried through the streets amidst hootings. Little more was needed for the image of Marie-Antoinette to have been treated in the same way. Sentiments of violence were felt vibrating in the crowd, which only awaited an opportunity to break out. The capitulation with the parliament was a wretched expedient, and not a solution. The storm was rumbling everywhere: all souls eager for action inhaled the electricity which filled the air. "From a tranquil chaos," wrote Mirabeau, "France has passed to a restless chaos: a creation may and ought to arise from it." And Mirabeau, who had not been called to the Notables, and who felt that his destiny was in a greater assembly, urged the parliamentarians not to accept the postponement of the States-General until 1792, but to exact them for 1789, — the *indispensable date*, he said; showing how mad, and fatal to the government itself, it would be to keep France in suspense for four years longer during such a crisis.[2] Affairs were progressing rapidly: this date of 1792, which Mirabeau so absolutely rejected for peremptory reasons, was that which La Fayette had

[1] *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 432.

[2] Letters of October 30 and November 18, 1787, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. IV. pp. 459–467.

Digitized by Google

demanded some months before, without much hope of obtaining it!

Mirabeau was not listened to. Brienne had resolved on his plan. Unable longer to have recourse to taxation, he had resolved to return to loans, but on the boldest scale. He had formed the project of presenting for registration in a body a series of loans to the amount of four hundred and twenty millions, realizable in five years,[1] with the promise to convoke the States-General before 1792. This delay would be employed in reëstablishing the finances; and the States, coming in a settled and tranquillized condition of affairs, could occupy themselves at leisure with ameliorations which would insure the future. This was at least what was to be said to the parliament. As to the King and Queen, Brienne calmed the apprehensions excited in them by the name of the States-General by representing to them, that, the loans once registered, the finances reëstablished, and the public mind blunted by so long an expectation, the States-General would be made a vain show, or even would not be convoked at all, since there would be nothing more to ask of them.

It was with this mixture of blindness and puerile falsehood that the last ministers of the monarchy prepared for the great battle of the Revolution.

Brienne, with the hope of alluring public opinion, added to the edict for the loan the so much solicited edict which restored a civil status to Protestants; meanwhile declaring, to appease the clergy, that the Catholic religion would always be the only public and authorized form of worship in the kingdom, and that the birth, marriage, and death of those who professed it could in no case be authenticated except according to the rites and usages of the said religion.[2] On the morning of November 19, the King repaired abruptly to the parliament, which had scarcely reopened after the vacation, and which was still very incomplete. Brienne, who had wrought upon the magistrates by all kinds of allurements, hoped to carry the majority, and to combine, by an equivocal form of session, the advantage of a voluntary registration and that of a bed of justice unresistingly obeyed. The keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, began by a speech injudicious if designed to win instead of to constrain votes, in which he recapitulated all the absolutist maxims of the beds of justice under Louis

[1] One hundred and twenty millions in 1788, ninety in 1789, eighty in 1790, seventy, in 1791, and sixty in 1792.

[2] *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 472.

Digitized by Google

XV. "To the monarch alone belongs the legislative power, without dependence and without partition," etc.; adding thereto, that the King could only find in the States-General a *more extended council*, and would always be the supreme arbiter of their remonstrances and *humble petitions*. The deliberation, however, was opened with freedom: each one gave and assigned the motive of his vote aloud. The leaders of the Opposition spoke at length and forcibly, but with decorum. The opinion which they sustained was that of Mirabeau, — to grant the first loan (that of one hundred and twenty millions) in consideration of the States-General for 1789. The discussion was prolonged six hours: the majority was gained over to the edict, with an entreaty to the King to hasten the States-General; when suddenly the keeper of the seals, instead of suffering the first president to count the votes, ascended the throne, whispered in the King's ear, then, on the order obtained from Louis, pronounced the registration of the edict according to the formula in use in beds of justice.

A prolonged murmur ran through the assembly, which saw a simple royal session for the purpose of free deliberation suddenly transformed into a bed of justice. The Duke of Orleans rose, and agitated, as though dimly discerning whither the step that he was taking was destined to lead him, said in a broken voice, "Sire, this registration appears to me illegal." Louis appeared not less agitated. "It is all the same to me," he replied. — "Yes, it is legal, because I will it!"[1] The despotic rudeness of the language ill concealed the hesitation of the heart. Louis ordered the second edict — that relating to the Protestants — to be read, and withdrew, leaving the parliament in session. The protest of the Duke of Orleans was more fully written out, and recorded in the official proceedings; and the assembly passed a resolution, stating that, in view of the illegality of what had just passed in royal session, the parliament declared that it took no part in the transcription upon its registers of the edict for the loans.

The insane arbitrary demonstration of the keeper of the seals had utterly ruined Brienne's plans. The court attempted rigor. The Duke of Orleans was exiled to Villers-Cotterets; and two parliamentary counsellors, who were reputed to have instigated this prince, were sent as prisoners to fortresses. The parliament responded by receiving a motion of Adrien Duport against *lettres de cachet, as null and void, illegal, and contrary to public and*

[1] Sallier (parliamentary counsellor), *Annales françaises*, pp. 128, 129.

Digitized by Google

natural law. The King summoned the parliament to Versailles, caused the decree to be stricken from its registers, and prescribed the registration of the edict in favor of the Protestants, despite the protests of the bishops present at Paris.[1] The parliament, though it would have gladly suspended every thing, yielded on this point, not to the demands of the court, but to the impatience of public opinion. The retrogressive Opposition, personified in D'Éprémesnil, signalized itself by fanatical declamations. "Would you crucify him a second time?" exclaimed D'Éprémesnil, raising his hand to an image of Christ. There were, nevertheless, but seventeen votes against the edict (January 19, 1788).

The parliament renewed its remonstrances against arbitrary punishment with more energy (March 11). Duport and the progressive Opposition gained the ascendency, and made the Company use a language such as Turgot and Voltaire would have been greatly astonished to hear from such lips. "Arbitrary acts violate imprescriptible rights. Kings reign only by conquest or by law. The nation claims of his Majesty the greatest boon that a King can bestow on his subjects, — liberty. . . . Sire, it is not a prince of your blood, it is not two magistrates, that your parliament demands again in the name of the laws and of justice, but three Frenchmen, three men!" The gravest thing, in point of fact, in the remonstrances of the parliament, was the following sentence: "Such means, sire, are not in your heart; such examples are not the principles of your Majesty: *they come from another source!*" The magistracy making itself officially the echo of the popular clamor against the Queen was one of the most evident signs that the Revolution was beginning.

This Revolution, which was so far to exceed the greatest revolutions of the past, was preluded in the manner of the Fronde. As in the times of Mazarin, and Anne of Austria, the war was everywhere between the parliaments and the governors of the provinces, who executed the orders of the clerical minister, and of the Queen, his protectress. The governors caused the edict to be transcribed by force upon the registers of the courts. The parliaments protested, defended themselves by reiterated decrees, and

[1] The Protestants continued to be excluded from royal or seigniorial judicial offices, municipal offices involving judicial functions, and places conferring the right of public instruction. — *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 474. Civil judges, in case of the refusal of curés or vicars, were to proceed to publish the banns, declare the parties united in lawful wedlock, inscribe the said declaration in a register kept by double entry, etc.

Digitized by Google

rendered borrowing impossible. Some had even refused the extension of the second twentieth granted by the parliament of Paris, and two among them had made remonstrances against the edict which restored a civil status to Protestants. They had not yet arrived at material warfare; but they were rapidly advancing towards it. The parliament of Paris, which, during four months, exclusively attached itself to making war upon the *lettres de cachet*, dealt a last blow to the loan by the remonstrances which it finally decreed, April 11, against the registration of November 19. The King replied, April 17, that there had been no need of summing up or counting the votes, because, when he was present at the deliberation, he *judged by himself*, and was not required to take account of the plurality. "If the plurality in my courts could prevail over my will, the monarchy would no longer be any thing but an *aristocracy* of magistrates." [1]

April 29, upon the denunciation of a young counsellor, Goislard de Montsabert, the parliament took the offensive by ordering an investigation into the conduct of the comptrollers who should undertake to verify the returns of private individuals concerning the twentieths. The parliament claimed that the progressive increase of the revenue from the twentieths, the purpose of this verification, was illegal. After preventing the realization of the loan, it attacked the resources of taxation.

A pacific issue was no longer possible. Bankruptcy was imminent. Great projects were agitated between the prime minister and the keeper of the seals. Brienne, tormented, like Calonne of late, with a disease which the sacerdotal character rendered still more scandalous in him, and which threatened his life by settling on his chest, clung with despairing eagerness to power and its material advantages: he bartered his archbishopric of Toulouse for that of Sens, which was much more lucrative, and caused a felling of timber, worth nine hundred thousand francs, to be given him, in addition, to pay his debts. He increased the revenue from his benefices to six hundred and seventy-eight thousand francs. This excessive rapacity, in a man who enforced economy on others, excited general indignation, and consummated the discredit of the government. Public opinion received with contempt and anger the rumors of a *coup d'état*, of the Maupeou style, which daily assumed more consistency. It was related that a mysterious work was being carried on at Versailles, by orders of the ministry, in a secret printing-house, where the workmen were kept under

[1] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 284.

Digitized by Google

strict surveillance. All the military commandants of the provinces were ordered to repair to their posts; and counsellors of State and masters of requests were sent to the seat of the parliaments, both with despatches, which were to be opened, May 8, everywhere at the same time.

Cabals of resistance were held, meanwhile, at the house of Adrien Duport, where the most influential men of the parliament[1] conferred with La Fayette, — Condorcet; the virtuous and liberal Duke de La Rochefoucauld, for whom so cruel an end was in store in our storms; the Duke d'Aiguillon, eager to efface the deplorable recollections of his father; and the Bishop of Autun, Talleyrand-Périgord, afterwards so famous under so many régimes. A journeyman printer found means, it is said, of transmitting to D'Éprémesnil a proof-sheet of the edicts secretly put to press by the ministry. D'Éprémesnil called for and obtained on the spot the assemblage of the chambers and the convocation of the peers, and entreated the first president to deliberate on what should be done in the existing state of public affairs (May 3).

The deliberation ended in a resolution of the highest importance, which was nothing less than a *Declaration of Rights* from the parliamentary standpoint.

"The court, . . . the peers in session therein, apprised . . . of the blows which threaten the nation by striking the magistracy, considering that the undertakings of the ministry against the magistracy . . . can have no other object than to cover . . . the former dissipation without having resource to the States-General, . . . and to annihilate the principles of the monarchy, declares that France is a monarchy, governed by the King, according to the laws; and that of these laws, several, which are fundamental, embrace and consecrate the right of the reigning house to the throne, from male to male, etc.,—the right of the nation voluntarily to grant subsidies through the organ of the States-General; the local laws and regulations of the provinces; the irremovableness of the magistrates; the right of the courts to verify in each province the wishes of the King, and to prescribe the registration thereof only so far as they are in conformity with the constitutional laws of the province, as well as with the fundamental laws of the State; and the right of each citizen never to be indicted before others than his natural judges, who are those designated by the law, and never to be arrested by any order whatsoever,

[1] Among them, we remark two names destined to figure among politicians for long years, Sémonville and the Abbé Louis.

Digitized by Google

except to be brought without delay before competent judges. The said court protests against any attack which may be made on the principles expressed above; and *unanimously* declares, . . . that, in consequence, none of the members composing it *should take part in any company composed of the same personages, and invested with the same rights, which is not the court itself;* and in the event that force, by dispersing the court, should render it powerless to maintain by itself the principles contained in the present resolution, the said court declares, that, from this time, it intrusts them, as an inviolable deposit, to the hands of the King, his august family, the peers of the kingdom, the States-General, and each of the orders, united or separate, which form the nation." [1]

Whatever concerns the provinces in these maxims would have suited the fifteenth century better than the eighteenth, and the provincial parliaments than the parliament of Paris, formerly so unitary: it was neither the American *Declaration of Rights*, nor that which France was speedily to proclaim in the face of the world, through the organ of more legitimate representatives than the parliament; but it was a countermine admirably directed, and opened in time to discover the subterranean work of the ministry.

New remonstrances were framed, moreover, in answer to the King's response of April 17.

"The ministers," said the parliamentarians to the King, "impute to us the mad project of establishing an aristocracy of magistrates. . . . What moment have they chosen for this imputation? That in which your parliament, enlightened by facts, and retracing its steps, proves that it is more attached to the rights of the nation than to its own examples. The French constitution appeared forgotten; the assembly of the States-General was treated as a chimera; Richelieu and his cruelties, Louis XIV. and his glory, the Regency and its disorders, the ministers of the late King and their insensibility, seemed forever to have effaced from minds and hearts the very name of the nation. All the stages through which peoples pass on the way to self-abandonment, — terror, enthusiasm, corruption, indifference, — the ministry had neglected nothing for the fall of the French nation. But the parliament remained. Men believed it struck with a lethargy which seemed universal: they were mistaken. Suddenly apprised

[1] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 284.

Digitized by Google

of the state of the finances, . . . it became uneasy; it ceased to delude itself; it judged the future by the past; it saw for the nation but one resource, — the nation itself. It resolved on its course, and gave the universe the unheard-of example of an ancient body, . . . rooted with the State, itself restoring to its fellow-citizens a great power, which it had used for them during a century, but without their express consent. . . . It expressed a wish for the States-General. . . . Your Majesty . . . promises them: his word is sacred. . . . The States-General will therefore be assembled! . . . To whom does the King owe this great design? To whom does the nation owe this great blessing? . . . No, sire; *there shall be no aristocracy in France; but there shall be no despotism!*"[1]

On the very next day (May 4), the resolutions of April 29 against the comptrollers of the twentieths, and of May 3 concerning the declaration of principles, were annulled by the council; and orders were given to arrest the movers of the two resolutions, Goislard and D'Éprémesnil. The two counsellors, forewarned, took refuge by night in the Palais itself. The parliament reassembled early on the morning of May 5, rendered a decree, placing the threatened magistrates under the safeguard of the King and the law, despatched a deputation to Versailles, and decided not to separate until the return of the deputies. The night after, the French guards entered the Palais through an irritated and grumbling crowd, and surrounded the Great Chamber, where the magistrates, reënforced by half a score of peers, were in session. A captain of the guards, the Marquis d'Agoult, read an order from the King, commanding him to arrest MM. Duval d'Éprémesnil and Goislard, wherever he might find them, and demanded that they thould be pointed out to him. "We are all Duvals and Goislards!" exclaimed the assembly with one voice: "if you take them, take us all!"

The officer retired to make his report. The deputies returned from Versailles without having been received. The officer reappeared at eleven in the morning, and reiterated his summons: no one responded. He ordered an exempt to enter for the purpose of recognizing D'Éprémesnil and Goislard. The policeman, infected with the sympathetic emotion of the spectacle, declared that he *did not see them*. Captain d'Agoult departed anew. The two counsellors and their colleagues judged that they had done

[1] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 285.

Digitized by Google

enough to assert the principle. D'Agoult was recalled; and D'Éprémesnil designated himself, and followed the officer, after an eloquent protest. Goislard did the same; and the parliament separated, after more than thirty hours' session, decreeing remonstrances in behalf of the liberty of its two members "wrested by violence from the sanctuary of the laws."

On the morning of the next day but one, the parliament was summoned to Versailles for the bed of justice which was expected. The King spoke in harsh terms of the errors of every kind to which the parliaments had abandoned themselves for the past year, and announced an extended reform in the judicial domain, conceived in a spirit of unity opposed to the separatist and provincial maxims of the parliaments, and the assemblage of the States-General whenever it was required by the necessities of the State; after which, six edicts, or royal declarations, were read. The first edict, on the administration of justice, increased the powers of the presidial courts, and created forty-seven great bailiwicks between the presidial courts and the parliaments, which were to decide, in the last resort, all civil suits of a value not exceeding twenty-thousand francs, and all criminal cases except those concerning ecclesiastics, noblemen, or other privileged persons. The second edict suppressed the exceptional tribunals, bureaus of finance, elections and jurisdictions of the *traites* (customs), freedom of the waters and forests, storehouses of salt, and chambers of the domains and the treasury. The third edict, till the general revision of the criminal ordinance of 1670, — a revision touching which all the subjects of the King were authorized to send their observations to the keeper of the seals, — abolished the prisoner's stool and all the other humiliations inflicted on the accused; commanded the judges no longer to employ in the sentence of condemnation the vague formula *for the causes resulting from the trial*, but expressly to recapitulate the crimes and misdemeanors of which the accused had been convicted; increased to three votes, instead of two, the majority necessary for a sentence of death; prescribed an interval of a month between the sentence and the execution (in order that the right of pardon belonging to the King might no longer be rendered illusory), cases of sedition excepted; granted to those acquitted the placarding of the acquittal at the public expense; and abrogated the preliminary question (preliminary to execution), which had been maintained at the time of the abolition of the preparatory question in 1780. The fourth edict suppressed two of the chambers of inquiries of the parliament of

Digitized by Google

Paris, and reduced the other three chambers to sixty-seven members in all. The fifth, after a preamble which set forth with considerable ability the necessity of registering the laws common to the whole kingdom, in a court also common to the whole kingdom, deprived the different parliaments of the verification of the ordinances, edicts, declarations, or letters-patent, and invested therewith the *plenary court*, an institution which the edict claimed to be prior to the parliament, and founded on the ancient constitution of the State,[1] and which had been mentioned in 1774, in the edict reëstablishing the parliaments, as a threat in case of betrayal of duty on their part. The *plenary court* was composed of the chancellor or the keeper of the seals, the great chamber of the parliament of Paris, including the princes and the peers, the high officers of the King's household, and a number of other members, taken from among the ecclesiastical and military dignitaries in the council of State, the provincial parliaments, and the other sovereign courts. "In the event of extraordinary circumstances, which may oblige us to levy new taxes upon our subjects before consulting the States-General, the registration of the said edicts in our plenary court shall be only of temporary effect, to last until the assemblage of the said States, which we shall convoke, then, *on their deliberation, to be decreed by us definitively.*"

The long series of measures planned by Brienne and Lamoignon ended with a declaration announcing the vacation of all the parliaments until after the entire execution of the ordinance concerning the organization of the inferior tribunals. The parliaments were forbidden to assemble under penalty of disobedience.

This was reacting Maupeou on a larger scale. But the faltering monarchy forgot that seventeen years had passed in the interval; and what years! Like Maupeou, Brienne and Lamoignon attempted to cause the acceptance of despotism under the cover of progress. The greater part of the reforms proclaimed in the criminal laws and the administration of justice, especially the suppression of the exceptional tribunals, were excellent; but the nation was no longer disposed to be lulled by a few partial ameliorations, while its wish to conquer the free disposal of itself was evaded, and the phantom of a supreme court was evoked for the purpose of obtaining provisional taxes, with the hope, indeed, of

[1] The ancient name of *plenary court* had never designated a political or judicial assembly in the Middle Ages. The King held *plenary court* on great festivals; that is, he gave feasts and tournaments to his vassals and guests. The assemblies for public affairs were called *plaids*, or *parliaments*.

Digitized by Google

rendering them definitive. The government aimed, in fact, at dispensing with the States-General, and denied their authority by law; the King reserving the right of *decreeing definitively on their deliberations*, which he would not, perhaps, even demand. He granted to them, therefore, only an advisory value. There was an abyss between the opinions of the crown and those of France.

The resistance had commenced in the bed of justice itself: the aged first president, D'Aligre, after the reading of the edicts, declared that the parliament neither could, should, nor would take any part in whatever might be done during the present session. He protested, in the presence of Louis XVI., against the overthrow of the constitution of the State, the recent violation of the seat of sovereign justice, and the despotism which it was now desired to put into the hands of the King, *and which the French nation would never adopt.* On quitting the session, the great chamber unanimously wrote to the King to decline the functions assigned to it by the edicts. The next day, on being convoked for the first session of the plenary court, it protested that it attended only passively. The son-in-law of the keeper of the seals signed the protest with the rest: his own son was in favor of the parliament! The King, like Louis XV. before the Maupeou parliament, declared before the plenary court that he should *always persist.* Nevertheless, he dared not convoke a second session, the majority of the peers having manifested the same intentions as the magistrates. The Chamber of Accounts and the Court of Aids had followed the movement. The Châtelet set the inferior courts the example of refusing the title and attributes of the great bailiwick, — an example which part of the presidial courts designated for this office esteemed it an honor to follow.

The movement of public opinion in Paris did not descend among the populace, as might have been supposed after the incidents of the last months; some of the friends of liberty were even troubled to see the masses of the people so torpid.[1] The popular

[1] La Fayette had written to Washington, October 9, 1787, that "France was coming by degrees, *without any great convulsion*, to an independent representation, and consequently to a diminution of the royal authority, but that this would proceed slowly." May 25, 1788, he wrote to him, "The affairs of France are verging on a crisis, the good results of which are the more uncertain, inasmuch as the people in general have no wish to go to extremities. *To die for liberty* is not the motto on this side of the Atlantic."

The Revolution had been foreseen long in advance. Now that it was close at hand, and impending over men's heads, they no longer saw it, or at least saw it only confusedly, and without calculating its true distance. La Fayette still relied only on

Digitized by Google

instinct in the capital felt that, at bottom, the cause of the parliament was not that of the people; and that the point in question, as yet, was only a civil war of the ancient régime against itself, the preface to the war of the people against the ancient régime. What was instinct in the masses was system in men important through intellect, — in many thinkers and literary men, Mirabeau at the head, who stood on the reserve, and waited, sure of not having long to wait.

While Paris preserved a deceitful calm, the provinces broke forth. All the provincial spirit that subsisted rose indignantly against the annihilation of the last relics of the old concordats which bound the provinces to the crown. The government, having offended the privileged classes without satisfying the people, had almost every one against it. The nobility of the sword, forgetting its ancient antipathy to the men of the robe, almost everywhere supported the parliaments in their violent protests. The privileged classes, more influential in the large provincial cities than at Paris, gave the impulse; the youth and the people of the towns were with whatever was turbulent; the body of the bourgeoisie, less ardent and more disposed to patience, had, nevertheless, neither esteem nor confidence for the government, and expected nothing except from the States-General. The government had not even known how to act an arbitrary part energetically: its only and very doubtful chance of preventing resistance in the provinces would have been openly to deal the parliaments an authoritative blow, and to exile the individuals while suspending the magisterial bodies. The magistrates, left concentrated in their towns, could everywhere concert together, assemble despite the prohibitions of the King, and issue scathing resolutions against the military commandants, and against those of the inferior tribunals who abandoned the *cause of the laws*, and accepted their new powers. The government replied too late by exiling certain

passive discontent or non-obedience, as being the greatest result that could be obtained by the friends of liberty. "I am sick," he wrote, "of seeing the people so torpid." Nevertheless, "the friends of liberty are daily growing stronger." They begin to *hope for a constitution. — Mém. de La Fayette*, t. II. p. 227. "*A constitution!*" was also the cry of Mirabeau. "This comprises every thing! *There is none yet*," he said in opposition to those who invoked the pretended constitution of the kingdom: "it can only be born of the States-General." His mind, much stronger and more penetrating than that of La Fayette, moreover, fell into an illusion, which proceeded from its very strength, concerning the facility of terminating the crisis. He saw only a defile to cross. The ills about which so much noise was made, "for the most part, do not exist. There is not an embarrassment that could arrest the most mediocre talent." — *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 151, 154, 164.

Digitized by Google

parliaments, summoning others to Versailles, and issuing a decree of the council which suppressed the protests of the courts, forbade the rendering of similar resolutions under penalty of forfeiture, and placed the *faithful* tribunals under the protection of the King (June 20, 1788).

The impulse given was not arrested. The parliament of Rouen, which had lately proclaimed that the law was above the King, had at first opposed only a passive resistance: it assembled secretly, June 25; declared *traitors to the King, the nation, and the province, and perjured, and branded with infamy*, all officers or judges who proceeded in virtue of the ordinances of May 8; and resolved "immediately to denounce to the King, as traitors to him and to the State, the ministers who had been the authors of the attacks on the religion of his Majesty, and especially the Sieur de Lamoignon, the keeper of the seals of France." The order of exile, despatched by the King in reply, gave rise to grave incidents. One of the presidents reproached the commander of the armed force for his passive obedience. "The authority of the King to do good to his subjects is unlimited; but all should set bounds to it when it turns to oppression."[1] The position of the military leaders became extremely difficult: they saw opposed to them not only *robins* (lawyers) and shop-keepers, but the order of the nobility to which they belonged, and which exercised a strong moral pressure upon them.

The agitation of Normandy did not go so far as insurrection; although Rouen was profoundly irritated by the arbitrary imprisonments, and vexations of all kinds, permitted by the commandant, the Marquis d'Harcourt, who conducted himself as if in a conquered country. Other provinces were less patient. The haughty Brittany was in a blaze. Even before the arrival of the commissioners of the King, the syndic of the States, the Count de Botherel, had protested, in the name of the three orders, before the parliament of Rennes, claiming *the execution of the marriage contract of Louis XII. and the Duchess Anne*. All the bodies sustained this proceeding. The commandant and the intendant of the province were hooted and threatened on their way to carry the orders of the King to the Palace of Justice. The moderation of the commandant alone arrested civil war. The parliament having assembled despite the King's prohibition, a detachment of soldiers marched to disperse it. A troop of armed gentlemen, followed by a crowd of people, hastened to protect the delibera-

[1] Floquet, *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VII. p. 234.

Digitized by Google

tion, which was finished in spite of the military authority. As at the time of the *battle of the Thirty*, the affair ended in a general duel between fifteen gentlemen and fifteen officers. The officers of another regiment, that of Bassigni, sided with the resistance, and protested in writing against the orders which they had received. The youth of Nantes armed, and came to the succor of the inhabitants of Rennes. The nobility, assembled at Rennes, Vannes, and Saint-Brieuc, declared infamous any one who should accept office either in the new tribunals or in a new arbitrary form of the States. Twelve gentlemen were despatched to Versailles, bearing a denunciation against the ministers. The ministry caused them to be thrown into the Bastille, disbanded Bassigni's regiment, and ordered sixteen thousand soldiers to march upon Brittany. The other two orders united with the Breton nobility in sending a second deputation, then a third much more numerous. The ministry was astonished, and dared not treat the new deputies like the first. Meanwhile, the intendant, Bertrand de Molleville, as violent as the commandant, the Count de Thiard, was moderate, had been hung in effigy by the populace, and had fled from Brittany.[1]

The valleys of the Pyrenees had their storms like the shores of Brittany. The peasant landholders of the mountains,[2] joined with the nobility, descending in a body upon Pau, seized the artillery of the place, and forcibly reopened the Palace of Justice, closed by the King's command. The commandant himself of the province, bowing the royal authority, invited the parliament to reassemble, in order to reëstablish order. The King sent the Duke de Guiche, of a very influential family, to the Pyrenees with extraordinary powers. The inhabitants of Béarn, both nobles and plebeians, went to meet the Duke, carrying in their midst, as a palladium, the cradle of Henri IV., and claiming, by this *holy token*, the execution of the contract which the King had made with them as the seignior of Béarn.[3]

These incidents were of an exciting and dramatic character; but the agitation in Dauphiny had a political scope which was much more decisive. June 7, on the intelligence that the parlia-

[1] See *Précis historique des événements de Bretagne;* Rennes, 1788.

[2] "In our rural districts, every one is a landholder." — *Remonstrances of the Parliament of Pau.*

[3] Béarn, like Navarre, was not dependent on the crown. — See the *Remonstrances of the Parliament of Pau,* which are very interesting, as summing up the political traditions of these two provinces.—*Introduction au Moniteur,* p. 345, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

ment of Grenoble (which, like the rest, had been suspended for a month) was exiled, the people of the city rushed to arms; called to their aid the mountain villages by the sound of the tocsin; erected barricades; drove back the two regiments of the garrison, which showed great repugnance to fighting; took possession of the residence of the governor, the Duke de Clermont-Tonnerre, and threatened to hang him from the chandelier of his drawing-room if he did not himself request the parliament to reassemble at the Palace of Justice. The parliament, somewhat dismayed at such a victory, endeavored to calm and disarm the insurrection; and, two days afterwards, its members, stealing away from their triumph, noiselessly and separately set out for the exile to which the King had consigned them, after, however, framing new remonstrances too well justified by events.

The guidance of the movement, abandoned by the parliament, was seized upon by others. A numerous assembly of citizens of the three orders met at the town-hall of Grenoble, and resolved that the States of Dauphiny, fallen into desuetude for many generations, should assemble spontaneously July 21. Hitherto, the resistance of special corporations and popular riots had been witnessed: on this day, the national sovereignty was seen for the first time in action.

This act opened the FRENCH REVOLUTION.

The Dauphinese movement, indeed, had had quite another aim than a return to the privileges of the Middle Ages. Very different from the insurrections instigated by the Breton and Béarn nobility, it was, or speedily became, more national than provincial. "The consent of the people convened in a national assembly is the basis of the social state," said the Grenoble declaration. This choice population, the violence of the first moment once appeased, showed an admirable good sense, behavior, and order, in agitation itself. The nobility swore to die for the rights of their province. The Third Estate aimed higher. A royal judge of Grenoble, Mounier, a friend of Necker, and a great partisan of the English institutions, who opened with lofty energy the career of the Revolution, but who would speedily pause therein, guided the Third Estate with a firm and skilful hand. The Archbishop of Vienne, Pompignan, the brother of the poet, urged on the clergy, and honored his old age by sentiments of political liberty unhoped for in this virulent adversary of philosophy.

The ministry, meanwhile, had placed twenty thousand soldiers

Digitized by Google

under the command of the Marshal de Vaux, for the purpose of repressing Dauphiny. The aged marshal wrote that it was too late! The court authorized him to compound. He required that his permission should be asked to hold the assembly of the States announced. This was consented to, on his promise to permit it. He forbade the assembly to meet at Grenoble. It was convoked at the château of Vizille, the former residence of the dauphins. There, invoking the memory of the hero of Dauphiny, Bayard, whose sepulchre is between Grenoble and Vizille, the assembly swore the union of the Dauphinese among themselves and with the other provinces, and the refusal of any new tax until the assembling of the States-General; and declared infamous and traitorous whomsoever should accept a place in the new tribunals: but at the same time proclaimed, as the Grenoble assembly had already done, that the Dauphinese were ready to sacrifice all their special privileges for the good of the State, and *claimed nothing but the rights of Frenchmen;*[1] that the tax substituted for the *corvée* should be paid by the three orders, and not by the *roturiers* alone; and that the Third Estate should have a representation in the Provincial Estates equal to the clergy and the nobility united in a single chamber. The two privileged orders, carried away by a generous impulse, had acceded to all the propositions of the Third Estate, of which Mounier, the secretary of the assembly, had been the real director. By his side had signalized himself a young advocate of Grenoble, now his ally, and subsequently his adversary in the great Constituent Assembly, — Barnave.

The assembly adjourned till September 1, after requesting of the King the withdrawal of the edicts, the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, the convocation of the States-General, and the sanction of the reëstablishment of the States of Dauphiny.[2]

The movements in the other provinces were not of so important a character; but the fermentation was universal. The disturbances were permanent in Provence, Languedoc, and Roussillon. The north and east protested with less vehemence, but not with less resolution. The army vacillated in the hands of the ministry. Justice was interrupted throughout almost all France. The anarchy was universal. The coffers were empty: it was impossible longer to exist by forestalments, the bankers refusing any

[1] This was far different from the declaration of the parliaments, that "the laws of a vast kingdom should not be uniform."

[2] *Introduction au Moniteur*, pp. 341, 547; Droz, t. II. p. 71; Soulavie, t. VI. p. 209; Floquet, *Hist. du parlement de Normandie*, t. VII. p. 157.

Digitized by Google

advances. The government was a wreck. The King took refuge in a sullen carelessness, and passed his life in hunting. The prime minister played Richelieu in his cabinet: "I have anticipated every thing, even civil war! The King shall be obeyed!" Loud words, which resounded in empty space! All was withdrawn: the minister who shared the Queen's favor with Brienne, Breteuil, tendered his resignation.

Brienne had attempted a last resource. He had convoked in June an extraordinary assembly of the clergy, hoping that the order to which he belonged would come to his assistance; that the clergy, so menaced by the spirit of the age, would understand all that it had to dread from a national assembly, and would decide to enable the crown to dispense with the States-General, either by a loan guaranteed by the ecclesiastical order, or by the abandonment of the monastic property to the State. The clergy comprehended nothing. Like the nobility, it energetically claimed the maintenance of the provincial local laws against an *unjust unity;* sided with the parliaments, its ancient adversaries; and also demanded the States-General with little delay. Each of the powers of the ancient régime repeated in turn, as if ruled by an invisible spirit, the word that was to hurl the edifice of the past from its foundations.

At the same time that it evoked the genius of the Revolution, and declared that "the French people are not taxable at pleasure," the clergy, retrograding far behind the Notables, formally protested against the application of taxation to ecclesiastical possessions, — against the *disorder of a false equality;* and demanded the renewal of the laws of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. concerning the integral guarantee of its immunities. With such views the last assembly of the order of the clergy of France separated.[1]

The government, if this name could still be given to the anarchy of Versailles, gave way before the clergy: a decree of the council forbade the extension of the collection of the twentieths to the property of the Church (July 5). A wretched *gratuitous offering* of eighteen hundred thousand livres was all that could conditionally be obtained from the assembly.

The dying monarchy struggled in vain. An irresistible force impelled it to that convocation of the nation which inspired it with such profound terror. Brienne, no longer hoping to avoid

[1] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 379, *et seq.* · The Archbishop of Narbonne, M. de Dillon, the orator of the clergy, nevertheless approved, with some reservations, the restoration of a civil status to the Protestants.

Digitized by Google

the States-General, strove at least to dissolve the coalition of the three orders against the crown. July 5, a decree of the council declared, that, after several months of investigation concerning the ancient States-General, it had been impossible "to ascertain in a positive manner the forms of the elections, any more than the number and quality of the electors and the deputies," the conditions having varied according to time and place. In consequence, the Provincial Estates and the new assemblies of different degrees were requested to express their wishes on this question; and all the municipal officers, officers of jurisdictions, syndics of the Provincial Estates and provincial assemblies, districts and parishes, and, in fine, all persons having knowledge of documents relating to the States-General, as well as *all scholars and learned persons*, were asked to address to the keeper of the seals any information and papers upon the same subject.[1]

The hand that had attempted to restore despotism, unchained, in fact, the liberty of the press! Brienne's calculation, that the Third Estate could not fail to enter into conflict with the privileged orders in the lists which were opened by royalty, was correct; but to dream of directing the attack of the Third Estate in favor of royalty was an absurd anachronism.

It was no longer possible to evade the prodigious movement of public opinion to which the government itself had just given a new impulse. The minister, then the King, resigned themselves to necessity. August 8, a decree of the council fixed the 1st of MAY, 1789, for the holding of the States-General, and suspended till this epoch *the reëstablishment of the plenary court.*

The fateful date, designated, the year before, by the finger of Mirabeau, was therefore fixed upon. The ancient régime, by the organ of its supreme power, itself set the time of its dissolution.[2]

Such an appeal, made in time, would have been welcomed with a unanimous transport of joy and gratitude. France was moved to her lowest depths; but she did not believe herself bound to gratitude towards those who appealed to her despite themselves, — the

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXVIII. p. 601.

[2] Malesherbes and other politicians had proposed to the King to convoke, instead of the States-General, a national assembly based upon the provincial assemblies; that is, the *great municipality* of Turgot. — See Droz, t. II. p. 82. It was too late: royalty had no longer the strength thus to abolish the three orders, and to replace them by unity founded on the sole basis of landed property. The privileged orders would have resisted, and the people would not have sustained a revolution which would not have been democratic, and which would have only suited the extremists of the Third Estate.

Digitized by Google

blind and fragile instruments of an immense work. While the decree of convocation resounded far and wide, the minister through whom it had been rendered was swallowed up in ignominy. Brienne, at the end of expedients, had not been ashamed to seize upon the product of the subscription designed to establish four new hospitals in Paris, and the funds of a lottery opened for the relief of the victims of a hail-storm which had just devastated our most fertile districts sixty leagues around the capital! August 16, he caused it to be decreed by the council that the payments of the State should be suspended for six weeks; then that the *rentes* and salaries should be paid until December 31, 1789, part in specie, and part in notes. The redemption of debts was postponed for another year. Two days after, he caused the Bank of Discount to be authorized, until January 21, to cease the redemption of its notes in specie. This appeared an evident prelude to bankruptcy. "The public malediction burst upon him like a deluge."[1] The court abandoned him. Brienne attempted a last chance of safety: he offered the comptroller-generalship to Necker. The Genevese refused to associate himself with a ministry destroyed in public opinion. Brienne tendered his resignation (August 25); and Louis XVI., conquered, submitted to Necker as he had submitted to the convocation of the States-General. The keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, followed Brienne three weeks after.[2]

The second ministry of Necker closes the Ancient Régime, and opens the Revolution.

Necker returned to public affairs under mournful auspices. The gloomy silence of Paris had given place to frenzied outbreaks. The joy at the dismissal of Brienne, then of Lamoignon, was of a vehement character, ending in bloody scenes, in which the government by turns caused its weakness to be despised, and its tardy violence to be execrated. After three days of illuminations, fireworks, shouts, and songs, the watch, until then motionless, made an unexpected and brutal onslaught on the crowd, on the Pont-Neuf. The next day, the young attorneys' clerks returned in force, armed with clubs, and burned Brienne in effigy. A crowd with gloomy faces and tattered garments joined the young men.

[1] *Mém. de Marmontel*, t. IV. p. 29, year xiii. (1804); *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 360.

[2] The blind favor of the Queen followed Brienne in his retirement, and procured him the cardinal's hat. Lamoignon and Brienne both ended their days by suicide, — the first, May 18, 1789; the second, February 16, 1794.

Digitized by Google

The body-guard of the watch was attacked and destroyed, except at the Grève, where a murderous fire dispersed the assailants. The disturbances were still graver at the fall of Lamoignon. Large crowds repaired to the residences of Brienne and Lamoignon, and to the house of the captain of the watch, threatening to burn them. The French and Swiss guards marched against the rioters. The multitude was hemmed in at two points between two detachments of troops, charging in an opposite direction, and a true massacre ensued, for which a frenzied resentment was cherished by the masses.

Material order was nevertheless reëstablished for some time at Paris; and Necker made great and intelligent efforts to relieve the exceptional calamities which imbittered the people, and to revive credit and commercial circulation. As minister of finance, he justified anew the confidence with which he had inspired the nation. The purses closed to Brienne were opened to him, and stocks rose thirty per cent. He obtained advances from the capitalists and from certain corporations; generously pledged his own fortune as a guarantee of the engagements of the State; persuaded the creditors to have patience; revoked the decree of August 16, called by the public the *decree of bankruptcy;* and succeeded in providing for the extraordinary necessities of the dearth, then of the rigorous winter of 1788–1789.[1] In a word, he aided France to exist during the few months of supreme anxiety which separated the Ancient Régime from the Revolution. This was the chief and the last honor of the Genevese minister.

The fall of Brienne and Lamoignon necessarily involved that of their whole system. For the second time during the reign, the parliaments were reinstated in triumph. The royal declaration which recalled "the officers of the courts to the exercise of their functions" advanced the meeting of the States-General to the month of January, 1789 (September 23, 1788). The parliament of Paris began by prescribing, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, investigations concerning "the excesses, acts of violence, and murders, committed in the city of Paris since the 28th of August;" then other investigations concerning the crimes of State imputed to the two fallen ministers. But the applause suddenly subsided when the terms in which the parliament had registered the royal declaration were known. "The court will ever . . . pray that the States-General . . . may be regularly

[1] Seventy millions were expended in assistance and in the purchase of grain.

Digitized by Google

convoked and composed, and this according to the form observed in 1614." The *form* of 1614 implied voting by order, and awakened the recollections most opposed to the interests and dignity of the Third Estate.

An immense void was instantly made around the parliament. Its army of advocates, attorneys, notaries, barristers, and young clerks, abandoned it. Its factitious popularity vanished. The torrent of political pamphlets, which had continued to increase since the appeal of July 5, turned against it. It was the sign that the real struggle was beginning, — the struggle of the people against the Ancient Régime: the confused preface to the Revolution was ended.

A last delusion was, however, possible from the apparent characteristics of the first incidents of the struggle. While the provincial parliaments, like the Supreme Court of Paris, laid claim to the old aristocratic forms of the States-General, the official corporations of the Third Estate, the municipal bodies, the industrial communities, the corporations of legists, and the commissions *ad interim* of the new provincial assemblies, replied by addresses to the King, in which they energetically demanded that the representation of the Third Estate should equal in numbers that of the two privileged orders together; and invoked the memory of Louis the Fat, St. Louis, Philippe the Fair, Louis the Headstrong, and all the kings who were reputed to have been allies of the bourgeoisie against the feudal system. It was a last effort to link to the past the unknown and unprecedented future which was close at hand.

Neither the King, nor even Necker, understood this last appeal. Necker showed himself at once the most able of financiers and the most indifferent of statesmen. Entirely mistaking the respective force of the parties (a force, moreover, which neither Mirabeau nor any one as yet wholly appreciated), he thought only of reconciling the Third Estate and the privileged orders, and declined the responsibility of deciding the question prior to all others, — the double representation of the Third Estate; as if this very modest pretension, to which the Third Estate still limited itself, was not a thing granted in advance by the law concerning the provincial assemblies and by the initial action of the Three Estates of Dauphiny.[1] It was of little importance that the preceding States had varied; that the Third Estate, though it had

[1] An extraordinary assembly, which met spontaneously at Privas, assented, in the name of the Three Orders of Vivarais, to the acts of the States of Dauphiny.

Digitized by Google

always surpassed in numbers each of the other two orders in the States, had never equalled them united. *The question was not*, as Mirabeau had said in the name of all the eighteenth century, and as the thousand voices of the press repeated, — *the question was not, what had been, but what should be.* Necker dared not decide *what should be.* The Notables, then the parliament, had resigned their functions; the one referring them to the King, the other appealing to the States-General. Necker resigned his, in turn, by the most impolitic act that could have been imagined. He recalled the Notables, in order to submit to them the composition and form of the States-General. He postponed anew, in fact, the urgent assemblage of the States, in order to consult with this assembly of privileged persons, which had already shown itself so powerless eighteen months before, and which the extraordinary movement of minds and events seemed to have left half a century behind.

The Notables reassembled, November 6, at Versailles. An enormous majority among them decided against the double representation of the Third Estate, and demanded the maintenance of the ancient forms, the ancient electoral divisions by bailiwicks and seneschalships, without taking into consideration the monstrous inequality of these districts in population, wealth, and extent.[1] At the same time that the Notables clung, as it were, to the past, they everywhere submitted to the influence of their times, but in a very singular manner: that is to say, that democracy which they rejected with affright in the whole national institution, they accepted separately in each of the three orders which composed the ancient system of society. They consented that every resident citizen of age, and inscribed on the list of taxpayers, should have the right of suffrage in the primary meetings of the Third Estate; that men of noble birth who were not possessed of fiefs should be entitled to vote by the side of the feudal lords in the assemblies of the nobility; and that all persons who had taken orders should participate by the side of the holders of benefices in the ecclesiastical elections. This relative democracy had indeed been awakened by the spirit of the age among the

[1] The bailiwick of Vermandois and the seneschalship of Poitiers, had, the one, seven hundred and seventy-four thousand five hundred and four inhabitants; the other, six hundred and ninety-two thousand eight hundred and ten. The bailiwicks of Dourdan and Gex had, the latter, thirteen thousand and fifty-two; the former, seven thousand four hundred and sixty-two. One bureau alone, out of seven, voted for the double representation of the Third Estate by a majority of one; and even this vote was due to chance.

Digitized by Google

privileged classes, but had not been created by it: combated and stifled by the aristocracy at certain epochs, and especially in certain provinces, it was at the bottom of the ancient France of the Middle Ages, which it had caused to differ widely from England: it had prepared our soil for unitary democracy.

What really belonged to the eighteenth century was the petition wrung from the Notables by the force of public opinion, "that the taxes might be borne by all Frenchmen." Eighteen months before, they had contented themselves with not rejecting this principle. It is true, that even this time, in proclaiming it, they lessened it as far as possible: they designed that the forms adapted to the constitution of each order should be maintained in this respect; that is to say, they opposed any general law for the assessment and collection of the taxes.[1]

The parliament suddenly interfered in the midst of the debates of the Notables by a striking recantation. Stunned by the tempest of public opinion which had assailed it, and terrified at the solitude which it had made for itself, it strove to retrieve its position by a resolution, in which it explained, it said, "its true intentions, perverted despite their clearness." It declared that it had meant, by the *forms of* 1614, only the convocation by bailiwicks and seneschalships, as being more convenient than that by governments or generalities; that, the number of the respective deputies of the different orders not being determined by any law or constant usage, the court had neither the power nor the intention of supplying the deficiency; and that the court referred to the wisdom of the King the modifications which reason, liberty, justice, and the general wish, might indicate. The parliament, moreover, entreated the King to permit no further delay in the holding of the States-General, but to declare and sanction their periodical return; the resolution to suppress the taxes borne by a single order, and to replace them, in accordance with the three orders, by common subsidies equally apportioned; the responsibility of the ministers; the relation of the States-General with the sovereign court, so that the courts neither should nor could permit the levy of any subsidy or the execution of any law not consented to by the States-General; and individual liberty and the liberty of the press, the writers and printers being responsible for what was printed (December 5).[2]

[1] *Introduction au Moniteur*, pp. 396–497.

[2] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 564. More than half the parliament did not participate in the voting.

Digitized by Google

What an effect would not such an act have produced during the struggle between the parliaments and the court! Now it produced none whatever. The privileged orders were indignant: the Third Estate derided a tardy and insincere espousal of their cause. The *rôle* of the parliaments was ended: the nation no longer needed mediums.

While the parliament of Paris bowed before the nascent Revolution, the princes of the blood made a feeble and vain effort against it. November 28, the Prince de Conti had declared in his bureau, to the Notables, that the monarchy was menaced, and had proposed to request of the King that "all the new systems should be forever proscribed, and that the constitution and its ancient forms should be maintained in their integrity." The King forbade the Notables to deliberate on a subject for which he had not convoked them, and requested the princes to communicate to him directly the views which they deemed it useful to express. The Count d'Artois, the three Condés,[1] and the Prince de Conti, addressed a memorial, therefore, to Louis XVI., in which they denounced "the revolution that was preparing in the principles of the government;" inveighed against the project of doubling the representation of the Third Estate; and hinted that the first two orders, if their rights were disregarded, would not recognize the authority of the States-General, and that the people would seize the occasion of their protests to evade the payment of the taxes consented to by the States. Princely feudalism ended by an appeal to anarchy: this was not belying its antecedents. The prelude to the emigration and the *army of Condé* already appeared.

The political press, the increasing *effervescence* of which the princes had bitterly attacked, replied to them without circumspection. Public opinion was indignant at the kind of capitulation which they disdainfully offered to the Third Estate. "Let the Third Estate," they wrote, "cease, therefore, to attack the rights of the first two orders, — rights which, not less ancient than the monarchy, should be as unalterable as the constitution; let it confine itself to soliciting the diminution of the taxes with which it *may* be overburdened: the first two orders *may* then, by the generosity of their sentiments, . . . renounce the prerogatives which have for their object a pecuniary interest."[2]

The Third Estate did not intend to implore favor, but to de-

[1] The Prince de Condé, the Duke de Bourbon, his son, and the Duke d'Enghien, his grandson.

[2] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 499.

Digitized by Google

mand justice. Pecuniary concessions could no longer conciliate it: its writers opposed menace to menace; and some advised to appoint no deputies unless the double representation of the Third Estate were obtained; others to elect a sufficient number, according to the ancient usage, without stopping at the number fixed by the letters of convocation. Many already thought the double representation of the Third Estate insufficient, and exclaimed that twenty-four million men ought to have more representatives than six hundred thousand!

A fortnight after dismissing his unlucky assembly of the Notables (December 12), Necker decided on his course, and induced the King to settle the great question of the double representation of the Third Estate in a manner opposed to the wish of this assembly. The royal decision was issued under the singular title, *Result of the Royal Council held at Versailles, December* 27, 1788. The King decreed, first, that the deputies, in the ensuing States-General, should number at least one thousand; secondly, that this number should be formed, as far as possible, in a combined ratio to the population and the taxes of each bailiwick; thirdly, that the number of the deputies of the Third Estate should be equal in number to that of the other two orders together.[1]

The Queen, irritated at the coöperation which the nobility had lent to the parliaments against Brienne, did not oppose this decision. Necker, in the long report to the King which preceded the *Result of the Council*, seemed to have thought only of extenuating the importance of the measure which he had just dictated to Louis XVI. "The interest which is attached to this question" (the double representation of the Third Estate), he said, "is perhaps exaggerated on both sides; for, *since the ancient constitution, or the ancient usages, authorize the three orders to deliberate and vote separately in the States-General*, the number of the deputies in each of its orders does not appear a question deserving the degree of warmth which it excites. It would doubtless be desirable for the three orders to unite voluntarily *in the examination of all affairs in which they have an equal or similar interest;* but this determination itself depends on the distinct wish of the three orders."[2]

[1] "There is but one opinion on this question in the kingdom," wrote Necker in his report to the King. The Notables had expressed precisely the opposite opinion. It was scarcely worth while to consult them!

[2] Farther on, he says that "it will never enter the mind of the Third Estate to seek to lessen the seigniorial or honorary prerogatives which distinguish the first two orders. . . . There is not a Frenchman who does not know that these prerogatives *are*

Digitized by Google

Necker was right. If the double representation did not involve voting in common, it was an insignificant concession: but public opinion was fully resolved that the first victory should carry with it the second; and that there should be but one assembly, and not three independent assemblies. Some publicists were indignant at the language of Necker, and accused him of betraying the cause of the people. Public opinion did better than inveigh against the reservations of the minister: it paid no heed to them. Paris, in illuminating with a thousand bonfires on the evening of the day on which the royal decision was issued, showed how it interpreted the meaning of the minister.

The feverish irritation of the privileged orders responded to the threatening assurance of the Third Estate. The example of Dauphiny was not followed. The spectacle of patriotic union, which had been offered by this province in the contest with Brienne, was nevertheless repeated in a new session of the States of Dauphiny at the end of December. These States, on the report of Mounier, decided that the deputies who were to represent Dauphiny in the States-General should be specially commissioned to obtain permission for the three orders to deliberate together, and for the votes to be counted by poll. In this event alone, the deputies were authorized to concur in the establishment of a constitution which would insure the stability of the rights of the monarch and those of the French people. A number of the privileged classes had protested: the majority remained united with the Third Estate.

It was not the same elsewhere. While the Dauphinese nobility manifested this wisdom and disinterestedness, the Breton nobility attempted civil war. The States of Brittany had likewise assembled at the end of December. The Third Estate presented a list of grievances, the redress of which it demanded prior to all deliberation; and demanded the vote by poll, and not by order, and the abolition of privileges with respect to taxation. The nobility, on its side, resolved not to deliberate upon the particular complaints of the Third Estate until after having finished the general affairs of the province. The assembly exhausted itself in violent and sterile discussions. A decree of the council suspended it until February 3, and sent back the deputies of the Third Estate to ask new powers of their towns. The Third Estate obeyed. The higher clergy and the nobility decided not to separate, and circu-

property as worthy of respect as any other," etc. Turgot would not have compromised the principle of property in this manner! — See *Introduction au Moniteur*, pp. 500–509.

Digitized by Google

lated through the rural districts a declaration in French and Low Breton, in which they accused the deputies from the towns of deceiving the nation, and making use of it for interests contrary to its own advantage. The law students, the youth of Rennes, replied by a virulent counter declaration. January 26, 1789, the domestics of the nobles, increased in number by some of the poor who had been roused to insurrection under the pretext of lowering the price of bread, attacked the bourgeois youth in the street with stones and clubs. No justice was to be expected from the parliament, wholly devoted to the nobility. The next morning, an attempt was made to recommence hostilities; but the young men were in readiness.[1] They marched straight to the cloister of the Cordeliers, where the nobility was assembled. At the sound of the shots which were exchanged, the alarm-bell rang. The people rose, but in support of the bourgeois. Had it not been for the pacific intervention of the Count de Thiard, Governor of Brittany, the nobility would have been overpowered. Immediately after, the youth of the neighboring towns hastened in armed bands to the assistance of the people of Rennes. Nine hundred came from Nantes, January 30. Angers, Poitiers, and Caen, held themselves in readiness to march. A document has been preserved which testifies to the delirious enthusiasm which had taken possession of the public mind, — *a resolution of the mothers, sisters, wives, and lovers of the young citizens of Angers*, declaring that, in case of the departure of the Angevine youth, *they will join the nation*, and perish rather than abandon their lovers, husbands, sons, and brothers.[2]

The nobles evacuated Rennes, and dispersed among their châteaux, covering their retreat by a new order from the King indefinitely proroguing the States of Brittany (February, 1789).

The privileged orders had no better success in Franche-Comté. The King had just consented to the reëstablishment of the Provincial Estates in this province, which had not witnessed their assemblage since the conquest of Louis XIV. The States of Franche-Comté immediately became the scene of an ardent strife between the Third Estate on one hand, and the nobility and the higher clergy on the other, who protested against the double representation of the Third Estate, and desired the election of the deputies to the States-General to be made by the Provincial Estates, formed aristocratically in the ancient manner, and not directly by

[1] Among the students of law figured a young man, afterwards General Moreau.
[2] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 544.

Digitized by Google

the population. The parliament of Besançon rendered a decree to this effect, and protested against all change in the constitution of the province; denying this right to the States-General themselves (January 27, 1789). The people rose, and put the parliament to flight.

These first collisions produced a profound impression throughout France. Terror began to be blended with anger among the privileged orders. They began to discern that the great party, which began in this manner, might stop at nothing. The party of the Nation proceeded, moreover, unmasked. It was by loudly announcing its projects that it paved the way for success. Innumerable writers[1] served it as heralds. The diversity was infinite in details; but the great majority had at that time but one spirit and one aim. "We have no constitution; we must have one.[2] Even if we had one, we should have the right to change it: the dead cannot bind the living. No erudition! — travesty not the question of the rights of man by making it a warfare of charters and titles." The distinction between the three orders was warmly attacked. To the champions of the nobility, who perpetually called to mind the noble blood spilt for the country, the great reply was made, "*And was the blood of the people water?*" A pamphlet was entitled "The GLORIA IN EXCELSIS *of the People*, followed by *Prayers for the Use of all the Orders, containing the* MAGNIFICAT *of the People, the* MISERERE *of the Nobility, the* DE PROFUNDIS *of the Clergy, the* NUNC DIMITTIS *of the Parliament, and the* PASSION, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION OF THE PEOPLE." The Advocate-General Servan wished the States-General to open with a declaration of the *Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the necessary portico of the temple of the constitution. Mirabeau demanded the suppression of the parliaments, which were to be replaced by elective and temporary judges. He abandoned the opinion which he had expressed elsewhere concerning the conferring of the electoral right upon landed proprietors alone, which would be, he said, "a great step towards political inequality. No individual should exist in the nation who is not elector or elected: all should be repre-

[1] It is said that more than three thousand pamphlets appeared in the ten months between July, 1788, and May, 1789.

[2] The privileged orders were not even agreed in replying that they had a constitution. The princes of the blood had claimed it. D'Éprémesnil, in a pamphlet, January, 1789, inveighed against "the imbecility of those who maintain that France has no constitution." Meanwhile, Besenval acknowledged, in his Memoirs, that there was none; "that there were only facts and traditions." Subsequently, Calonne wrote against, and Monthion in favor of it.

Digitized by Google

sentatives or represented. The representation should be equal; that is, each aggregation of citizens should choose as many representatives as another of the same importance.[1] Without the Third Estate, the first two orders certainly do not form the nation; and alone, without these first two orders, it still presents an image of the nation. I will not say that the order of the nation should prevail over the two orders which are not the nation: *I bequeath this principle to posterity.* . . . I do not wish to be, at least in political assemblies, either more just or more wise than my age."

Mirabeau wrote these lines at the very moment when the Third Estate of Brittany was *prevailing* by main force *over the orders which were not the nation.* Events were about to show that the age, in a body, was progressing faster than the greatest among individuals.

It was not Mirabeau who had the terrible honor of concentrating the whirlwind, and launching the thunderbolt preceded by so many lightnings, but a new-comer, sprung, like him, from the privileged orders. "WHAT IS THE THIRD ESTATE?" asked the Abbé SIEYÈS.

"What is the Third Estate? Every thing.

"What has it been hitherto in the political order? Nothing?[2]

"What does it ask? To become something.

"The Third Estate is a complete nation. If the *privileged order*[3] were taken away, the nation would not be something less, but something more. It is impossible, among all the elementary parts of a nation, to discover where to place the caste of nobles. What is a nation? A body of associates, living under a common law, and represented by the same legislature. An order of nobles is a people apart in a great nation. The Third Estate is every thing.

"What has the Third Estate been? Nothing. If the aristocrats undertake to hold the people in oppression, I venture to ask, By what title? If it is replied, By the title of conquest, the Third Estate will go back to the year preceding the conquest: . . . it is strong enough to-day not to let itself again be conquered.

[1] He meant by importance the combination of the number of the inhabitants, the wealth of the country, and the services which the State derived from men and fortunes. —*Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 600.

[2] It was Chamfort that well-nigh furnished Sieyès his famous title, — "What is the Third Estate? Every thing. What has it? Nothing." Sieyès modified it happily. —See the *Œuvres choisies* of Chamfort.

[3] He says *order*, not *orders*, because the clergy, not being an hereditary caste, was not to him an order, but a profession.

Digitized by Google

Sons of the Gauls and Romans, why shall we not send back the pretended heirs of the Franks to the forests of Franconia? Our birth is as good as theirs. Yes, it will be said; but, by conquest, the nobility of birth has passed to the side of the conquerors. Well, we must bring it back to the other side: the Third Estate will again become noble by becoming the conqueror in its turn.

"What does the Third Estate ask? The merest trifle, in truth, — that its deputies may be at least equal in number to those of the privileged orders, *as long as privileged orders exist.*"

Sieyès next attacked the English school, which was willing to abandon one of the branches of the legislative power to three or four hundred families of the higher nobility, while throwing the petty nobility into the house of representatives of the Third Estate.

"What has been done?" he next asked, and forcibly criticised what had been done. "What is there to do?"

He appeared at first only to demand, like Mirabeau, that the Third Estate, which was every thing in right, should be something in fact. He ended here, however, by claiming that the Third Estate should be every thing in fact as in right.

"The nation is the law itself. The nation is not subject to a constitution: it cannot be so. The parts of what is believed to be the French constitution do not agree with each other: to whom, then, does it belong to decide? To the nation, independent of all positive form. Even though the nation had its regular States-General, it would not belong to this constituted body to decide upon a difference affecting the constitution.

"An *extraordinary* representation alone can alter the constitution, or give us one; and this CONSTITUENT representation should be formed without regard to the distinction of orders.

"The nation must be taken from forty thousand parishes. Who has the right to convoke the nation? When the safety of the country impels all the citizens, it should rather be asked, Who has not the right? What remains for the Third Estate to do? To organize the body of the government, and to subject it to forms which will guarantee its aptitude for the end for which it has been established. The Third Estate cannot form the States-General alone, it will be said. So much the better! — it will compose a NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. . . . Its representatives will hold their powers from the twenty-five or twenty-six millions of individuals who compose the nation, with the exception of about

Digitized by Google

two hundred thousand priests or nobles.[1] They will deliberate for the whole nation, with the exception of about two hundred thousand souls. . . . It is impossible to say what place two privileged bodies should occupy in the social order: it is like asking what place should be assigned in the body of a sick man to the malignant humor which is undermining and tormenting him. It is necessary to *neutralize* it, and to reëstablish the working of the organs in such a manner as to prevent the formation of any more morbific combinations." [2]

The programme of the Revolution was drawn. The *Nation* had only to execute the plan of campaign of its audacious tactician.

January 24, 1789, the letter convoking the States-General at Versailles on April 27 had appeared, accompanied with a regulation concerning the form of the elections. The number of deputies was increased to twelve hundred, — six hundred for the Third Estate, and three hundred for each of the first two orders. The King decreed that the bailiwicks and seneschalships which had sent deputies directly to the States-General of 1614 should preserve this privilege; that the small number of bailiwicks and seneschalships which had acquired claims analogous to the first since 1614 should be admitted to the same prerogative; with this exception, it was endeavored to proportion the number of deputies to the importance and population of each aggregate body. The bailiwicks and seneschalships which had not been directly represented in the States-General of 1614 were to send deputies conjointly with those of the first class, according to proximity and origin. The first-class bailiwicks and seneschalships were to convoke on March 16, at the latest, the bishops, abbés, curés, *endowed* communities,[3] ecclesiastics provided with benefices, and nobles possessed of fiefs, for the general assembly of the bailiwick or seneschalship. The chapters were to appoint one deputy for ten canons; the priests attached to the chapters, and the priests without benefices, domiciliated in the towns, one deputy for twenty; the religious communities, one deputy for a community.[4] The beneficiaries and the nobles possessing fiefs were to vote individually. The

[1] He should have said five or six hundred thousand, including the women and children.

[2] The pamphlet of Sieyès has become rare. The analysis of it may be seen in the *Introduction au Moniteur*, pp. 606–608; and the quotations given by Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI.*, t. VI. pp. 299–303.

[3] The mendicant monks were excluded.

[4] The communities of women were entitled to be represented by an ecclesiastic.

Digitized by Google

priests without benefices, domiciliated in the rural districts, and the nobles without fiefs, were to be entitled to vote individually. In the towns named in the schedule annexed to the present regulation, the inhabitants were to assemble, at first, by corporation; the corporations of the arts and trades were to appoint one deputy for a hundred electors present; the corporations of the liberal arts, merchants, etc., were to appoint two per cent; the native inhabitants, or naturalized Frenchmen, aged twenty-five, domiciliated and included in the list of tax-payers, who formed a part of no corporation, were likewise to elect two deputies for one hundred. The deputies chosen by the different separate assemblies, forming the general assembly of the Third Estate of the town, were to meet at the town-hall to draw up the *cahier* (official instructions) of the complaints and grievances of the town, and to appoint the number of deputies of the second degree fixed in the said schedule to carry the *cahier* to the bailiwick or seneschalship. Paris alone was to send a deputation directly to the States-General: the other cities were to vote for the States only with the whole bailiwick or seneschalship of which they formed a part. In the parishes, burghs, and villages, and in the towns not included in the aforesaid schedule, all the inhabitants together were to coöperate in framing the *cahier* of their commune, and directly to appoint two deputies for two hundred hearths or under; and three, for from two to three hundred hearths, to carry their *cahier* to the bailiwick. The deputies of the Third Estate, elected in the towns and the rural districts, were to meet in each bailiwick or seneschalship for the purpose of reducing the *cahiers* to a single one, and of choosing from among their number, in the proportion of one to four, deputies to carry the *cahier* of the bailiwick to the general assembly of the first-class bailiwick, to contribute to reduce to a single one the *cahiers* of the different bailiwicks under the jurisdiction of the superior bailiwick, and to elect the deputies to the States-General. Each order was to draw up its *cahiers*, and appoint its deputies separately, *unless they preferred to proceed in common.*[1] The *cahiers* of each order were to be decided upon definitively in the assembly of the order. The deputies to the assemblies of different degrees were to be elected *vivâ voce;* the deputies to the States-General were

[1] Necker timidly suggested, by this clause, that union of the three orders in the electoral assemblies which he had not dared cause the King to decree for the National Assembly. The suggestion was not regarded.

Digitized by Google

alone to be elected by closed ballot. There were to be as many ballots as deputies.[1]

Among the anomalies and inequalities which were preserved by this new form of election, and which Mirabeau strongly censured from the stand-point of universal and direct suffrage,[2] we discern the idea of a compromise between the confused traditions of past times[3] and the rational requirements of the spirit of the age. The genius of common law had nevertheless succeeded in making immense progress by conquering the formal participation of every tax-payer in the preparatory operations. It belonged to the assemblies that proceeded from these operations to complete the work.

The electoral period opened. All France did not assemble at the same day, as has since been seen. The bailiwicks were convoked one after another. During nearly three months, the movement spread slowly over the surface of the country with an infinite variety of incidents and emotions. A whole volume, and a large one, might be written on the official proceedings of these thousands of assemblies, where the humblest citizen, in the most remote corner of France, could open his heart, and express his aspirations and wishes. In the recesses of our national archives reposes the soul of a whole generation; and what a generation! — that by which was effected the transition from one world to another, — from ancient to modern France!

The meetings of the Third Estate were signalized, in general, by the calmness and dignity of the deliberations: it went forward like a great army well disciplined, and confident of victory. At Paris, it began by an act of sovereignty, — the substitution for the presidents and secretaries imposed on it by the government, of presidents and secretaries voluntarily chosen. The assemblies of the towns were, however, more remarkable for the character than the number of the voters. The masses were better fitted for

[1] *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 557.

[2] *Réponse à Cerutti*, ap. *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 223–227.

[3] At the time of the ancient States-General, the deputies had been appointed in Burgundy, Provence, Languedoc, and Brittany, by the Provincial Estates, so oligarchic in their composition, without the intervention of the people. At Paris, in 1614, the elections had been made by the municipal corporation, with a small number of notables, chosen in great part by the district officers. A portion only of the people had been represented by a few deputies from the trade corporations. — See our t. XII. p. 234. By a regulation of April 13, 1789, it was enacted that no one should be admitted into the assemblies of the Third Estate at Paris except on the payment of a capitation-tax of six livres. — *Introduction au Moniteur*, p. 576. This restriction called forth vehement complaints.

Digitized by Google

revolutionary action than for the regular working of free institutions; the proletaires proper were found outside the assemblies, and a great part of the artisans summoned did not vote: the elections were made almost everywhere by the middle classes.[1] There was, on the contrary, nothing but disturbance and clamor in the meetings of the nobility. The provincial gentlemen recriminated against the court nobility, and accused the great lords of having opened the door to the philosophers: it seemed a routed army firing upon its leaders. With less tumult, the assemblies of the clergy presented not less discord. The democracy of the curés held in check the aristocracy of the bishops; and the long-standing discontent of the lower clergy produced a general outbreak, of which many symptoms, especially a great number of political pamphlets, had given warning.

The nobility and the higher clergy attempted that secession in Brittany with which the princes of the blood had threatened France in their memorial to the King. They claimed for the Provincial Estates the right to appoint the deputies to the States-General; and, as this was unheeded, refused to proceed to the election (April 17–20). They ended only in depriving the party of the ancient régime of thirty votes in the States-General.

In Provence, the most violently dramatic scenes signalized the epoch of the elections. Here, as in Brittany and the two Burgundies, the privileged orders had protested against the doubling of the Third Estate, and had claimed the election of the deputies to the States-General for the Provincial Estates recently reëstablished in Provence, the same as in Dauphiny and Franche-Comté. Mirabeau, in the chamber of the nobility in the Provincial Estates, had supported the rights and interests of the Third Estate with extraordinary brilliancy, and revealed an orator such as the world had not heard since the tribune of antique eloquence had closed.[2]

[1] At Paris, few of the lower classes voted, except in the large faubourgs. M. Droz, nevertheless, makes the number of voters infinitely too small (twelve thousand): there were probably at least twenty-five thousand out of sixty thousand electors, as M. Buchez affirms. — *Hist. parlementaire de la Révolution*, t. I. p. 240, 2d edit. There were sixty arrondissements or electoral quarters; and we see that there were four hundred and seventy-six voters in the quarter of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont alone (*ibid.*, p. 276). It may be remarked, that the proportion of voters to the whole number of electors has generally increased during the different phases of the Revolution for the last sixty years. Bailli, in his Memoirs (t. I. p. 13), says, that, at Paris, the men who were afraid of displeasing the courtiers and the adversaries of the impending changes abstained from appearing at the assemblies.

[2] It is in a reply to the chambers of the clergy and the nobility, which had treated him as *an enemy of the public peace*, that is found the celebrated passage: "Among all

Digitized by Google

Excluded by his order, on some frivolous pretext, he became the idol of the Provençal people (January–February). When he reappeared in the month of March for the elections, the whole population went to meet him on the highways, scattering palms, laurels, and olive-branches in his path: the young men escorted him on horseback, and the towns received him with bonfires. Sedition, meanwhile, was fermenting in Marseilles: the political effervescence of the moment; the sufferings of a cruel winter, combined with the general dearness; and the imprudent provocations of the nobles, who had endeavored to stir up the rural districts against the towns, — all had united to irritate the populace, who had just forced the *échevins* to lower the price of meat and bread to a rate disproportioned to the real value. Marseilles was in the midst of anarchy. Mirabeau hastened thither; usurped, so to speak, the dictatorship of genius; improvised a civic militia; revived the courage of the municipal council; addressed himself to the good sense of the populace; and without fighting, without reaction, by the sole ascendency of eloquence and reason, persuaded the people to permit the low rate of provisions, extorted by the mob, to be abolished (March 22–26). Meanwhile, blood was flowing at Aix. The Marquis de La Fare, the first consul of Aix and the leader of the party of the nobility, furious at seeing the Third Estate disposed to elect Mirabeau, incensed the people by his provocations, sought an occasion for a conflict, and ordered the soldiers to fire. Several of the people fell. The populace rushed on the soldiers, dispersed them, forced the first consul to fly to escape certain death, and seized the grain stored by the city. Mirabeau returned from Marseilles to Aix, harangued the people, caused the weapons to fall from their hands, reëstablished the free circulation of grain, and restored every thing to order as if by enchantment; then likewise appeased Toulon, which was in insurrection; delivered, by the force of per-

peoples, in all ages, the aristocrats have implacably persecuted the friends of the people; and if, by some strange freak of fortune, some one of these has risen up in their midst, they have attacked him above all, eager as they have been to inspire terror by the choice of their victim. Thus perished the last of the Gracchi by the hand of the patricians: but, struck by the mortal blow, he cast a handful of dust towards heaven, calling upon the avenging gods; and from this dust was born Marius, — Marius, less illustrious for having exterminated the Cimbri than for having thrown down in Rome the aristocracy of the nobility. . . . I am, I have been, and I shall be till death, the advocate of public liberty, the advocate of the constitution. Woe to the privileged orders when their members are men of the people rather than of the nobles! for privileges will end, but the people is eternal" (January 5, 1789). — See *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 233–260.

Digitized by Google

suasion, the Bishop of Sisteron, one of the leaders of the aristocrats, pursued and besieged in Manosque by the peasants; and set out again for Paris, as the deputy of the Third Estate of Aix and Marseilles, amidst the applause of Provence and of all France. These were the purest and the most glorious movements of his stormy and contested career.[1]

In the majority of the provinces, the immense moral agitation of the elections did not transform itself into material conflicts or street riots. The solemnity of the act which was accomplished awed the public mind. Provence, however, was not alone disturbed: the elections at Paris, retarded by the fault of the ministry, were darkened by scenes which presaged social tempests beyond the revolution which was beginning, and announced those sinister conflicts between the middle and the lower classes which were destined to be the scourge of the new régime. Between the appointment of the electors by the primary meetings and that of the deputies by the electors, the house of Réveillon, a manufacturer of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, who had been accused of speeches hostile to the working-men, had been sacked therein.[2] A furious mob devastated and burned every thing. The authorities, who had suffered the sedition to increase for two days without doing any thing to check it, repressed it at length by a large body of troops, and with great bloodshed, after an infuriated combat, in which the rioters defended themselves with stones and clubs against the musketry (April 28). The parties accused each other reciprocally of having instigated the sedition in order to profit by it.[3]

It was under the impression of this lugubrious incident that the preparation of the *cahiers* of Paris was completed. The operations were ended almost everywhere in the provinces. It is impossible to give here a complete analysis of the *cahiers* of the bailiwicks and seneschalships, — that vast testament of ancient

[1] *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. V. pp. 274–309; Buchez, *Hist. parlement*, t. I. pp. 229–281. Together with Mirabeau, a Protestant was elected by the Third Estate of Marseilles. The minister Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, the son of a celebrated pastor of *the wilderness*, was chosen at Nîmes.

[2] It was pretended that he had said that the working-men earned too much; that they could live on fifteen sous a day. This, according to all appearances, was a pure calumny.

[3] The language of certain counter-revolutionary publications was of a nature to strengthen the suspicions. "Who can say," wrote the journal *L'Ami du Roi*, "whether the despotism of the bourgeoisie will not succeed the *pretended* aristocracy of the nobles?" Réveillon accused an abbé, his personal enemy, and attached to the household of the Count d'Artois, of having instigated the movement.

Digitized by Google

France. We can only sum up the most salient features. A powerful interest is attached to this last manifestation of the three orders into which French society had been divided for so many centuries.

The *cahiers* of the clergy demanded that the Roman-Catholic religion should remain the sole public worship. Part of the *cahiers* accepted *civil tolerance:* the rest demanded the revocation or reconsideration of the edict of November, 1787, on Protestant marriages, and the interdiction of offices and posts to non-Catholics, with the most rigorous observance of Sundays and feast-days. Many of the *cahiers* demanded the maintenance of the censorship of books; almost all, the reëstablishment of the national and provincial councils, in order to revive ecclesiastical discipline; the abolition of the plurality of benefices; and the execution of the laws prescribing residence in their dioceses to prelates. A considerable number of the *cahiers* demanded the abolition of the concordat, the reëstablishment of free ecclesiastical elections, and the reintegration of the curés into all their primitive rights; and that the authority (of the bishops) should be confined within the bounds set by the holy canons. The clergy demanded the maintenance of all their honorary rights, as the first order of the State: *they renounced all pecuniary exemption*,[1] but claimed the right of apportioning their share of the taxes themselves. They demanded the increase of the revenues of the curés and vicars, and the abolition of perquisites; the preservation of the monastic orders, with the provision that they should be generally employed in the education of youth, the service of the hospitals, etc.; and the abridgment to eighteen of the age for the monastic vows. One *cahier*, however, anticipating the contingency of the suppression of the convents, demanded that provision should at least be made for the future support of the monks.

Complaints were made of the openness of public prostitution and libertinism; of the lascivious paintings, sculptures, and engravings, *which corrupt the heart through the eyes;* of gaming-houses, and of the immorality of plays. It was demanded that a plan of national education should be made; that education should be confided everywhere to ecclesiastical, secular, or regular communities; and that school-masters and school-mistresses should be settled in all the parishes, subject to the inspection of

[1] The last assembly of the clergy, in June, 1788, had demanded the maintenance of the pecuniary privileges: but these assemblies represented the higher clergy alone; the lower clergy had the preponderance, in turn, in the States.

Digitized by Google

the curés, and even removable by them. The clergy depicted public education as being in a deplorable state since the destruction of the Jesuits. The *cahier* of Laon demanded the formation of an educational corps, under the authority of the bishops. It was demanded that no professor should be admitted into the universities or the schools who had not given proof of his attachment to the Catholic religion; and that not only the public colleges, but the private educational institutions, should be subject to ecclesiastical authority.

Some of the *cahiers* desired that the King should be entreated to establish a new electoral division of the kingdom, arranged in proportion to the extent and population, without distinction of provinces, *pays d'États*, and generalities. Some demanded that the States-General should be permanent; others, periodical. The inviolability of the deputies was demanded. The *cahiers* were divided on the important question of the vote by order or by poll: several, by a sort of compromise, accepted the vote by poll on the taxes alone. In general, they laid down the distinction between the three orders as the basis of the constitution of the State with the hereditary monarchy. The *cahier* of the viscountship of Paris placed among the fundamental laws the exclusive use of the Catholic religion as the public form of worship, and the inviolability of the property of *corporations* as of private individuals. The eligibility of all citizens to ecclesiastical, civil, or military employments, according to their merit and services, and not according to their birth, was demanded. No law should be established except by the authority of the King and the free consent of the States-General. Taxation should only be consented to temporarily, and the consent should be renewed at each session of the States-General. The *cahier* of Lyons demanded the abolition of all privileges or exemptions of provinces, towns, or corporations. Individual liberty, the abolition or reduction of *lettres de cachet* to regular forms with guarantees, and the abolition of the slave-trade and of slavery, or at least the mitigation of the lot of the negroes, were demanded. The *cahiers* of Melun and Moret demanded the destruction of all the relics of serfdom in Franche-Comté and throughout France. The responsibility of the ministers; the perpetual interdiction of the violation of the secrecy of letters; Provincial Estates everywhere; a sovereign court, or court of appeal, in every province; justices' courts, or councils of arbitrament; the irremovableness of the magistrates; the abolition of the vendibility of office; the abolition of excep-

Digitized by Google

tional tribunals, and the abolition or reformation of seigniorial courts; reforms in civil and criminal law; the cessation of distinction of rank and birth in the application of punishment;[1] and the abolition of tortures revolting to humanity, — were demanded. (In general, the clergy demanded the same reforms in criminal law which were preached by the philosophers, except that they desired the maintenance of the punishment of death for sacrilege, or the crime of high treason against divinity.)

The *cahiers* demanded the establishment of the same form of elective administration for all the municipalities in the towns, burghs, and villages; the suppression of the lotteries and the *monts-de-piété;* hospitals in the rural districts; the subjection of all charitable institutions to public administrations or charitable boards; and the simplification of the apportionment and collection of the taxes. The clergy requested that their debt, contracted, they said, for the service of the State, should be assumed by the State.[2] The abolition of the militia and the *corvée*, the suppression of the *captaincies* (established for the preservation of the royal hunting-grounds, and the source of infinite vexations), and the suppression, by means of redemption, of the *banalities* (obligation to use the mill, wine-press, etc., of the seignior), *franc-fiefs* (dues on the transfer of a fief from a noble to an ignoble tenant), seigniorial *corvées*, *cens* (quit-rents), *champarts* (field-rents), and other feudal rights, were demanded. Many *cahiers* demanded the suppression of all industrial and commercial privileges, trade-wardenships and masterships, etc. Some demanded the interdiction of loans of money at interest.[3]

The essential characteristic of the *cahiers* of the clergy was the preponderance of the curés. The lower clergy, held in strict subjection by the bishops since the time of Louis XIV., had risen energetically in the assemblages of the bailiwicks, and imposed their spirit upon the *cahiers*. They had two faces, so to speak, — one turned towards democracy and progress, the other towards the Mid-

[1] Nobles were decapitated and plebeians hung for the same crimes; the first of these two punishments not being regarded as infamous.

[2] A very ill-founded pretension. The clergy had preferred borrowing to taking the *gratuitous offerings* from their revenues. Had their pretensions been admitted, their past gratuities, in point of fact, would have been nothing but advances to the State. Their demand was specious only with respect to the loans in which they had simply lent their guarantee to the King.

[3] The *cahier* of Colmar and Schlestadt, in order to arrest the *swarming* of the Jews who were devouring Alsace, petitioned that the eldest son of each Jewish family should alone be permitted to marry!

Digitized by Google

dle Ages. For instance, they desired a democratic reformation, to a certain point, in the Church and the State; election everywhere, save in royalty; the abolition of pecuniary and feudal privileges;[1] a great increase of public charity; the reformation of the courts; and respect for individual liberty. In all these points, they agreed with the spirit of the age. On the reform of morals, they still agreed at least with the school of Rousseau. On the important question of suffrage by poll or by order, that is, on the unity or the triplicity of the national assembly, they were hesitating and divided. On the proscription of the liberty of worship, the universal attribution of public instruction to the clergy, the restrictions on the press, and the preservation of their honorary privileges, they looked towards the past.

It might already be foreseen that the clergy, no longer the aristocratic clergy of the ancient triennial assemblies, but the democratic clergy of the States-General, would favor the first phase of the Revolution, and oppose the second.

The *cahiers* of the nobility offered more diversity than those of the clergy. A few demanded that the order of the clergy should be suppressed, and its members apportioned among the other two orders. Others, on the contrary, desired that a fourth order should be created by separating the peasants from the people of the towns. Some of the *cahiers* accepted the vote by poll, at least on the taxes: the great majority was absolutely opposed to it. The deputies should be inviolable. France had a constitution, whatever factious innovators might say. The question was, not to change it, but to root out its abuses. Royalty was the greatest of all privileges: the other privileges destroyed, that of royalty could not long endure. The States-General had not the right to abolish fundamental laws *without the express consent of the nation.*[2] According to the Constitution of the French Empire, which had fallen into desuetude by the abuse of arbitrary power, and which it was necessary to recall to its true principles,

[1] They had a singular manner of interpreting their immunities with respect to taxation: the clergy, according to the *cahiers*, had alone preserved the right of voting freely on the taxes, — a right which the other two orders had suffered to expire by limitation. This interpretation attested the immense progress of public opinion. The clergy in the past had desired, not to *vote freely* on the taxes, but not to pay any taxes at all.

[2] *Cahier* of Bugey, ap. *Résumé général des cahiers*, t. II. p. 29. "The States cannot, *by their authority alone*, substitute aristocracy or democracy for monarchy,. They would be tyrants should they ever dare lay hands on individual liberty and property." — *Ibid.* The nobility thus recognized the full sovereignty of the nation as to political forms, but not as to the rights pertaining to human individuality. The question was only rightly to define *property*.

Digitized by Google

two causes must always concur in the formation and the abrogation of the law, — the consent of the nation, and the decree of the prince. *Lex consensu populi fit et constitutione regis* (*cahiers* of Évreux and Alençon). Some of the *cahiers*, in the minority, tended, on the contrary, to pure monarchy, attributing to the King the legislative power, without other reservation than with respect to taxation.

Some of the *cahiers* demanded a declaration of the rights belonging to all men. Concerning individual liberty, *lettres de cachet*, the violation of the secrecy of letters, the periodicity of the States-General, the inviolability of the King, and the responsibility of the ministers, the nobility agreed with the clergy. It was demanded that the constitutional laws should be drawn up in a kind of catechism, to be taught in the parishes. Some of the *cahiers* protested against the establishment of a chamber hereditary or for life (this was the cry of the petty nobility against the great lords in Mantes and Meulan). Several of the *cahiers* demanded the abolition of State-prisons; that of Paris solicited the demolition of the Bastille; Mantes, Meulan, and Berry demanded the abolition of the relics of serfdom of the glebe, and preparatory measures for the destruction of negro slavery. Most of the *cahiers* demanded the entire liberty of the press, with the responsibility of the printer and the author; a few reserved the ecclesiastical censorship of books treating of dogmas, or the right of justices of the peace to prevent the distribution of dangerous works.

The nobility *consented to the abandonment of their pecuniary privileges, and to the equality of taxation*, but claimed as sacred and inviolable property the rights, both useful and honorary, which they held from their ancestors, feudal rights, distinctions, and honors, seigniorial courts, etc., and enjoined on their deputies to refuse all modification or redemption by legislative means.[1] They likewise entitled property the customs, contracts, and capitulations of the provinces. They demanded Provincial Estates, but on a different plan from that of the clergy, and while seeking to reduce the influence of the curés as too democratic. The *cahiers* demanded that the provinces should administer their own affairs. Many of the *cahiers*, like those of the clergy, demanded that there should be as many sovereign courts as provinces: some desired the judicial offices to be put up for competition by the King, or bestowed on persons nominated by the people. The suppression of

[1] Some of the *cahiers*, however, consented to the redemption of tolls and banalities.

Digitized by Google

the intendancies and the exceptional tribunals, and the establishment of justices of peace and elective municipalities everywhere, were demanded. The *cahier* of Dourdan demanded that the municipalities should be, not parochial, but cantonal. Concerning judicial reforms, the nobility well-nigh agreed with the clergy; but many of the *cahiers* demanded, besides, the reëstablishment of the trial of the accused by his peers or by jury. A few of the *cahiers*, like those of the clergy, desired the abolition of distinctions in punishment. Concerning the lotteries, hospitals, etc., they agreed with the clergy.

The *cahiers* of the nobility also demanded a plan of national education. Many consented for the instruction to be left to the clergy. The *cahier* of Bayonne desired the establishment of schools of administration and the rights of nations for the purpose of training administrators and members of the diplomatic corps. The *cahiers* demanded that the debts of the clergy and the different corporations should be left to their charge, and that there should be no more loans based on life-*rentes*. Some of the *cahiers* protested in advance against all paper-money: others accepted it as a contingency. The establishment of a tax on the income from personal property and manufactures was demanded. The nobility demanded measures in favor of long leases. Some of the *cahiers* desired obstacles to be placed in the way of the formation of large farms, as prejudicial to agriculture and population. The majority desired the maintenance of the militia, but with reforms. The reservation to seigniors of the exclusive right of the chase in their fiefs was demanded.

The majority demanded the freedom of commerce and manufactures; the definitive permission of loans at interest; the reduction of the number of feast-days; the cessation of the payment to Rome of annats and dispensations; and the abolition of the concordat, the reëstablishment of the elections, and other ecclesiastical reforms, like the *cahiers* of the clergy. Many of the *cahiers* demanded the redemption of the tithes, which were to be used for the support of worship, the maintenance of religious edifices, and the relief of the poor; others desired their extinction in favor of the owners of the lands. Part of the *cahiers* demanded that the monks should be made useful; others, that they should be suppressed. It was demanded that non-Catholics should be reinstated into all the rights of citizens. The *cahiers* demanded for the nobility an exclusive and honorary mark of distinction, and the exclusive right of wearing the sword; also that the nobility

Digitized by Google

should be empowered to carry on commerce, or farm estates, without derogation from their rank. Several of the *cahiers* demanded measures to prevent the army from becoming the instrument of the executive or ministerial power against the laws; others desired the reëstablishment of the corps suppressed in the King's household. It was demanded that no officer should be removed without a legal trial. The greater part of the *cahiers* approved the measures which interdicted military rank to those not of noble birth, and protested against the preference accorded to the court nobility over the provincial nobles in the higher grades.

The resemblances and the differences between the *cahiers* of the nobility and those of the clergy are alike remarkable. Of the two privileged orders, each willingly sacrificed the privileges of the other: the clergy condemned feudal rights and the privileges of birth; the nobility attacked the tithe and the convents. It is easy to draw the conclusions. Like the clergy, the nobility had reached the point of consenting to equality of taxation. Those pecuniary exemptions, the sacrifice of which the reformatory ministers themselves had dared solicit but by halves, and the principle of which the privileged orders had the day before reproached the Notables for not having sufficiently defended, — these same privileged orders, assembled from one end of France to the other, and consulted in a body, abandoned in principle and in fact. It was one of the most glorious victories ever won upon earth by the sentiment of justice.

Unhappily, it was too late for the people to whom this sacrifice was offered to see in it only the sentiment of justice. That was conceded to them which they felt themselves in a position to exact; and they saw in this concession, above all, a homage to their power. There remained but too many causes of dissension. The nobility defended the rest of their prerogatives with so much the more obstinacy. They refused the union of the three orders in one national assembly, as well as the redemption of the greater part of the feudal rights: they had the sentiment of individual liberty, and this is their best title to respect; but they desired liberty for others only where their interests or pride were not injured thereby; they also desired equality, but equality within their own order, and inequality outside of it. They justified but too well the saying of Sieyès: they were a petty nation within the great one; and this petty nation wished to exist apart, and to lead its own distinct life.

This was what the Third Estate, the great nation, could no longer endure. Equality! — such was its demand by the thousand

Digitized by Google

voices of the *cahiers*, in the language of the *Social Contract*. All men had been equal before their civil association: they should still be equal in the sight of the constitutional laws of political bodies. The body or the individual who refused to participate in the public burdens, or who was only willing to support them in a less proportion and a different form from that pursued with respect to other citizens, broke the civil association so far as he was concerned (*cahier* of Nivernais). We order our representatives, said the *cahier* of Paris, steadfastly to refuse every thing that might offend the dignity of free citizens who come to exercise the sovereign rights of the nation. It was expressly enjoined on them to consent to no subsidy until the declaration of the rights of the nation had become law. All power, said they, emanates from the nation. The general will makes the law; the public power secures its execution. All property is inviolable. No citizen can be arrested or punished except by legal trial. No citizen, even military, can be dismissed without trial.[1] Every citizen has the right to be admitted to all employments, professions, and dignities.[2] The abolition of personal serfdom without indemnity; of serfhood of the glebe, with an indemnity to the landed proprietors; of compulsory militia service; of the violation of public faith in letters intrusted to the mails; and of all exclusive privileges, except temporarily for inventors, — should be decreed. The press should be free, the authors and printers being held responsible.

The executive power, said a multitude of the *cahiers*, should never interfere in the electoral assemblies. The kingdom should be divided into electoral districts. The elections should be made in the rural districts by communes; in the towns, by arrondissements, and not by corporations.[3]

All the *cahiers* exacted the vote by poll, "to correct the inconveniences of the distinction of orders," said the *cahier* of Paris. The *cahier* of Rennes went much farther than that of Paris: it demanded the suppression of orders. "The States-General shall be composed of deputies from the whole nation, completely and uniformly represented throughout the kingdom, without distinction of orders, and without the number of the ecclesiastical or noble deputies exceeding the proportion of the number of voters of each of these two classes. It is by error that what is called the

[1] Admitted by the clergy.

[2] The nobility had made the same demand.

[3] The *cahier* of Rennes desired that proxies should be admitted for widows whose husbands would have been entitled to vote.

Digitized by Google

Third Estate has been entitled an *order:* with or without the privileged classes, its name is the *People* or the *Nation.*" The agents of the treasury, the depositaries of any part of the royal authority, and the agents of the seigniors, should neither be voters, nor eligible as deputies (*cahier* of Rennes). Some demanded voting by two or three degrees; others, the direct vote. The deputies of the States-General should not be considered as holders of particular powers, but as representatives of the nation. The States-General should assemble, by right and without convocation, at fixed epochs (some of the *cahiers* desired that they should be permanent: the majority, at least triennial). There should be no more humiliating distinctions for the Third Estate, no more *roture*, and no more *doléances*. In case the deputies of the clergy and the nobility should refuse to give their opinion in common and by poll, . . . the deputies of the Third Estate, representing twenty-four millions of men, *could and should still entitle themselves the national assembly*, despite the secession of the representatives of four hundred thousand individuals; . . . and should declare themselves ready to coöperate with his Majesty in the execution of all the objects which were designed to be submitted to the examination of the three orders united, offering to admit to their deliberations the deputies of the clergy and the nobility who might desire to coöperate therein (*cahiers* of Dijon, Dax, Saint-Sever, and Bayonne).

The deputies should be inviolable. The provinces and the electoral assemblies could prescribe no limiting condition to the deputies sent by them to the sovereign assembly of the nation (Paris, *extra-muros*). The principal source of the errors and abuses of the administration was the lack of a fundamental law, fixing, in a precise and authentic manner, the effects of the national constitution and the limit of the powers. The States should lay down the bases of this constitution, etc. The *cahiers* recognized the fact of hereditary royalty from male to male, etc., and of royal inviolability. The greater part laid down the principle, that the legislative power belongs to the nation,[1] and the executive power to the King, yet granted to the King the right of sanctioning the laws, and the participation in the right of initial action with the States-General. It was not by the establishment of an upper chamber, but by a triple deliberation in the assembly, that the disadvantages of precipitate decision should be prevented. The constitution made in the present States-General

[1] To the nation, conjointly with the King, said the *cahier* of Paris.

Digitized by Google

could be changed only by the representatives of the nation, appointed *ad hoc* by all the citizens. For the convocation of this national extraordinary assembly, the well-attested wish of two thirds of the provincial administrations would be required.

The abolition of State-prisons and *lettres de cachet* was demanded, and the establishment, on the site of the demolished Bastille, of a public square, with a column in the midst, bearing the inscription, "*To Louis XVI., the restorer of public liberty*" (*cahiers* of Paris and Montfort l'Amauri). The black code should be reformed, and the way paved for the abolition of slavery. The functions of the public power could not become property. Rights in violation of natural rights could never have become property. Ministers were responsible to the nation. Any one who might attempt to prevent the meeting of the States-General, or to reëstablish arbitrary power, should be punished as a traitor to the country.

All tax-payers should be inscribed without distinction on the same tax-lists. Concerning the provincial and municipal administrations, the *cahiers* of the Third Estate differed little from those of the other orders. The communes should be accountable to the districts, the districts to the provincial assemblies, the latter to a commission of the States-General. Concerning tribunals, courts of appeal, and justices of the peace, they likewise nearly agreed with the latter: some of the *cahiers* demanded the election of judges by all the members of the legal profession (*cahier* of Saint-Quentin). The majority desired the abolition of the seigniorial courts; others, only their reform. It was demanded that the cognizance of offences committed by soldiers should be attributed to the ordinary judges, save purely military crimes. Most of the *cahiers* demanded the framing of a single civil code for all France. "A shapeless mass of Roman laws and barbarous customs, of regulations and ordinances discordant with our manners, and without unity of principle, . . . cannot form a legislation worthy of a great nation" (*cahier* of Paris).

The abolition or restriction of feudal rights and *lignagers*, the abolition of entails, the abolition of the iniquitous law (*emptorem*) which authorized the purchaser of an estate to cancel the lease granted by the former proprietor, and the abolition of primogentureship, were demanded.[1]

The *cahiers* demanded that prisoners for debt should be sepa-

[1] The *cahier* of Nivernais demanded the abolition of a local law of that province which excluded sisters and their children in favor of brothers and their children in collateral successions. This was a relic of the ancient barbarous laws.

Digitized by Google

rated from prisoners for crime; that loans at legal interest should be permitted to all; that measures should be taken for the institution of trial by jury; that a new criminal code should be framed (with all the reforms demanded by the philosophers); that the confiscation of the property of criminals, and all stigma on their innocent families, should cease; that capital punishment for theft should be abolished; and that the penalty of death should be thenceforth decreed only for arson, poisoning, assassination, and rape (*cahier* of Nivernais).[1] Those acquitted should be indemnified. The barbarous edict of Henri II., condemning to death pregnant women who miscarried before declaring their pregnancy, should be abolished.

All agriculturists should be permitted to own muskets. Concerning lotteries, prostitution, etc., the *cahiers* of the Third Estate differed little from those of the clergy. Several manifested a regulating spirit, opposed to political economy, concerning the establishment of the price of bread and meat, and even of wages. Concerning public assistance, the spirit of Turgot reappeared, and was even exceeded. Work should be insured to all the able-bodied poor, means of relief to the infirm, and *loans on easy conditions* to laborers and artisans who lacked tools in order to work. Each commune should be bound to support its invalid poor, and a workshop for the poor should be established in every district. To secure the suppression of mendicity, a portion of the ecclesiastical property should be restored to its original destination. Provision should be made for the industrial education of foundlings.

Many of the *cahiers* demanded that there should be but two taxes,—a land-tax on real estate, and a personal tax on the income from personal property; others, that the salt-tax and the aids at least should be replaced by two simple and uniform taxes, equally apportioned. A few even favored the taxation of real estate alone, like the physiocrats. If taxes on consumption were continued, they should not be laid upon articles of prime necessity. All duties which fettered commerce should be abolished.

Like the other orders, the Third Estate demanded a plan of national education, in which it claimed a place for the exercises which give the body a robust constitution. There should be free schools in every parish, where children should learn reading,

[1] This is one of the most remarkable of the *cahiers*. We quote it here on account of the lofty morality of its spirit, which at once desires the abolition of the death-penalty for simple offences against property, and its maintenance for personal assaults, placing in the same rank assassination and rape.

Digitized by Google

writing, and, in the towns, the elements of the useful arts. Standard books should be written for the schools, teaching the elementary principles of morality and of constitutional rights. The schools should be under the jurisdiction of the municipal and provincial assemblies. All the chairs in the universities and colleges should be open to competition. A school of public, national, and foreign law should be established (for diplomacy). A chair of ethics and of public law should be established in each university. Colleges should be founded in all the important towns. That principle should be modified in the régime of our colleges, which, by subjecting all the young men who attended them to the Catholic form of worship, necessarily kept away those who professed another form of religion (*cahier* of La Rochelle).

An aid fund should be established for the relief of agriculture. Prizes should be offered as an encouragement to agriculturists. Marine-plants and salt should belong to all. Landed proprietors should have the right to work the mines and quarries on their estates. The studs should be suppressed, and the stallions distributed through the country. Like the nobility, the Third Estate demanded that bounds should be set to the too great extent of farms, as prejudicial to population, as well as to abundance of cattle and manures.[1] Restitution should be made to the rural communes of their usurped common lands. The States-General should inquire whether it was most useful to preserve the common lands, or to divide them among the members of the commune?[2] The grain-trade should be free within the kingdom; exportation being interdicted when the provinces demanded it. France should be wooded anew.

Feudalism should be abolished (here follows a long list of feudal annuities, *champarts*, rights of redemption and withdrawal, banalities, various *corvées*, tolls, etc., including those ancient rights, *as outrageous as extravagant;* such as the *jambage*, replaced by a tax, and the *silence des grenouilles*[3]). Allodial property should be

[1] This opinion, hostile to agriculture on a large scale, is remarkable. The details prove that the point in question here was not only to prevent incumbents from letting their lands at wholesale to speculators who underlet them, but also to interdict effective agricultural unions.

[2] It was not sufficiently reflected that this partition between the *present members* despoiled the *members to come.*

[3] The *cahier* of Rennes demands the abolition of "the barbarous usages under which five hundred thousand individuals are still groaning in Lower Brittany; such as *congeable domain, mote,* and *quevaize,* odious relics of feudal tyranny." This was the most marked wish of the colonists. The feudal origin of congeable domain, that

Digitized by Google

made universal. The natural right of destroying injurious animals on his own ground should be restored to every agriculturist. The captaincies (for the preservation of the King's hunting-grounds) should be abolished. The chase should be permitted to every owner of fifty arpents, and to every farmer of two hundred arpents (*cahier* of Étampes). Offences of the chase should be punished only by moderate fines. Proprietors of the right of the chase should enjoy it only from September 15 to May 1, for arable lands; and, after November 1, for vineyards.

There should be full liberty of commerce and manufactures at home, and protective restrictions abroad. Most of the *cahiers* demanded the abolition of trade wardenships and masterships while preserving regulations for apprenticeship. A national aid fund for commerce should be formed. A fund should be established, in every town of importance, to facilitate commerce and destroy usury. Weights and measures should be uniform. Foreign coasters should be excluded, and other measures taken for the protection of maritime commerce. A commercial code should be established.

As regarded the non-Catholics, all the *cahiers* agreed that there should be full liberty of conscience, and that there should be no exceptions to the principle of the eligibility of every citizen to all civil and military employments: but strong indications are still remarked of that prejudice of external unity which had survived in many minds the groundwork itself of belief; for instance, the *cahier* of Rennes, revolutionary as it was, desired that the Catholic religion should be the only public form of worship; and even the *cahier* of Paris admitted that the public order would allow of but one dominant religion. Nîmes, Nivernais, and others demanded that the free profession of every religion based on sound morality should be permitted, — the reëstablishment at least of the state of things prior to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Marriage should be permitted between persons of different faith. The liturgy should be uniform in the dominant church.[1] It was desirable that the public services and prayers should be in the French language (Paris, *extra-muros*). The too great number of feast-days should be lessened; the maintenance and constitutional consecration of the Gallican liberties, conformably to the

antique *usage* of the provinces of the Celtic tongue, is disputed. We cannot enter into the discussion: we only verify the popular hostility of '89. The *cahier* of Vannes agrees with that of Rennes, and explains in detail the abuses of this *usage*.

[1] Part of the *cahiers* of the clergy had expressed the same wish; but a Gallican liturgy was meant by this, and not the adoption of the Roman liturgy, as to-day.

Digitized by Google

declaration of 1682, were demanded, together with the abolition of the concordat, and of all transmission of money to Rome. This was the general cry. The majority desired that the bishops and the curés should again become elective: a few left the choice of the bishops to the King. The national and provincial councils should be reëstablished. The formulary of Alexander VII. should be abolished.[1] No more dispensations should be asked from Rome. Marriages between cousins-german should be permitted without dispensation. The ecclesiastical revenues should be restored to their original destination; namely, the support of ministers of religion, the subsistence of the poor, and the maintenance of the places designed for divine service. The amelioration of the condition of curates and vicars, and the suppression of perquisites and alms, were demanded. Part of the *cahiers* demanded the suppression of all the convents; others, at least the suppression of the mendicant orders; others, only that means should be devised to render the religious orders more useful, to diminish the number of their houses, and to put off the taking of the vows until the age of twenty-five or thirty; and that the monks should not lose their civil rights, but should be unable to dispose of their property in favor of monasteries. The revenues of the abbeys in commendam and the monasteries suppressed, and a part of the revenues of the wealthiest bishoprics, should be applied to the colleges, hospitals, etc., and to the payment of the debts of the clergy, and also to that of the public debt. A part of the property of the clergy should be sold for the payment of their debt. Some of the *cahiers* called for the suppression of the tithes; others, for a very large reduction, with a regulation concerning their application; several, for their transformation into a land-tax for the support of the officiating clergymen, the church-buildings, and the relief of the poor.

Hereditary nobility being necessarily nothing but a token of respect, a preference of public opinion for the descendants of eminent men, it could not be made the subject of a law rendering this preference independent of public opinion, and of the merit of those who were the object of it. Hereditary nobility should therefore confer no legal prerogative, no exemption from public burdens, no special right to national representation nor to any place (*cahier* of Rennes). Nobility should no longer be purchasable with money. An honorary and civic reward, purely per-

[1] Which obliged ecclesiastics to swear that they believed in the *point of fact* decided by the Pope against Jansenius.

Digitized by Google

sonal, and not hereditary, should be instituted by the States-General, which, on their nomination, should be conferred by the King upon citizens of whatever class who should have merited it by the eminence of their patriotic virtues and their services (*cahiers* of Paris and Toul).

The troops belonging to the nation could not, without rendering themselves guilty of the crime of rebellion and high treason, favor the violation of the constitution or the national laws, or obstruct the liberty of the assemblies of the States-General or Provincial by preventing their formation or reassembling, or by effecting their dispersion. No officer or soldier could act hostilely in his country, except in cases anticipated by positive laws, and this under the penalty of death, as a traitor to his country.[1] No military man should be deprived of his place without trial. The army should be composed only of national troops. All enlistment should be voluntary (in time of peace). The troops, in time of peace, should be employed on the public works.

The last page of the last volume of the General Summary of the *cahiers* leaves an impression, the tragicalness of which nothing can surpass. This is an extract from the *cahier* of Rouen, proposing that the nation should erect at Paris, in the midst of a public square to be called the *Place des États-Généraux*, a monument dedicated to Louis XVI. in memory of this new compact of alliance between the King and his people!

Instead of the *Place des États-Généraux*, we had the *Place de la Révolution*: in the midst of this place, all know what monument was erected to the last King of ancient France!

It would be impossible to comprehend so terrible a vicissitude in less than four years, if we saw only the public acts and official words of '89, and if we believed that every thing was expressed in the definitive *cahiers* of the bailiwicks, — in this measured and temperate result of all the movement of ideas produced amidst the assemblies of all degrees. The *cahiers* of the Third Estate were the last attempt at conciliation between the nation and the ancient government; the last effort to transform traditional royalty peacefully, and to associate it with the new order of things. The moderation of the Third Estate proves that it felt the immense gravity of the situation. Agreeing with the other orders on the destruction of administrative arbitrariness, on individual liberty, on the freedom of labor, on what would to-day be styled decentralization, on judicial reform, and on many other social needs; agreeing with

[1] Admitted by the *cahiers* of the nobility.

Digitized by Google

the clergy against the privileges of the nobility, and with the nobility against the privileges of the clergy; proclaiming the principle of property, like the other orders, but attaching thereto quite a different meaning, the meaning of the philosophers, and especially of the economists, and recognizing only individual property [1] and public property; desiring, in fine, in addition to the other orders, and *absolutely* insisting on, the unity of the National Assembly, — the Third Estate nevertheless, at least the majority, did not even demand the formal abolition of the ancient *Social Constitution*,[2] and of the distinction of the three orders: the majority still seemed tacitly to consent for half a million of citizens, organized separately from the masses, to preserve as many representatives in the National Assembly as twenty-five millions of citizens! By much greater reason, it did not bring royalty into question while proclaiming the sovereignty of the nation. Are we thence to conclude that there was nothing in public opinion beyond the wishes officially expressed in the assemblies? — that men were at heart as *royalist*, as *Gallican*, as the language of the *cahiers* denotes? This conclusion would not be well founded: nevertheless, they were sincere. They sought to bind the future to the past, for the Church as for the State, without closely interrogating the bounds of possibility; without really asking themselves whether ancient royalty, with its complex and confused traditions, concentrated and unified at length in the monarchy of divine right according to Louis XIV. and Bossuet, was adapted to become the head and hand of a free and elective government; and whether the generation reared by Voltaire and Rousseau was in the moral condition suited to restore the elective church of ancient Christianity. It was because communities never plunge voluntarily into an unknown future: God precipitates them thither in spite of themselves. And what a future! What society, since the world began, had ever seen so gigantic a problem propounded to it?

A deputy from Auvergne, Malouet, urged the minister Necker to respond to this attempt at conciliation made by the Third Estate by persuading the King to seize the initiative, to decide the question of the vote by poll and the unity of the assembly, and to present to the States-General the bases of a constitu-

[1] Which could not comprise the pretended exceptional rights, contrary to natural right and to true civil law.

[2] *Social Constitution:* we employ this term designedly. France had a social constitution, since society was organized there upon a certain plan: she had not, or had no longer, a political constitution, since this organization did not end in the regular working of defined institutions.

Digitized by Google

tion in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the *cahiers* of the Third Estate. Malouet desired that Louis XVI., not having been wise enough to be the author of reformation, should constitute himself the leader of revolution; but the depth of this revolution Malouet was far from fathoming. However this may be, it would at least have been entering with a bold mien the domain of the unknown. The proposition did not even reach Louis XVI., who would have inevitably rejected it. Necker intrenched himself behind the *liberty of the States-General:* it was for them alone to decide concerning themselves. An illusion of self-love lurked under a scruple worthy of respect: Necker fancied that the Third Estate and the privileged orders, after the first dissensions, would request him to be the arbiter of their debates, and that he would have the glory of settling them by some middle course. He did not see that his fragile individuality was about to disappear before the first steps of the colossus of the Revolution.

Nothing remained for the deputies of the Third Estate to do but to act in the plenitude of the right of the nation; to march straight forward through all obstacles and all resistance, with or without their instructions, not only if these instructions were mute, but if they were insufficient, contradictory, or inapplicable. The theory of imperative instructions, retrospectively evoked at times by the champions of the ancient régime, is that of federative republics, where independent political bodies associate within limits and for objects which are determined. It could not be that of a unitary state. A great nation being unable to assemble entire on a Champ de Mars to dictate its intentions to its representatives, the different sections of this same nation, deliberating alone, are very far from giving the equivalent of the sentiment which the nation would have had united; and the representatives of these different sections, when they unite in a single body, express the national sentiment in a manner much less imperfect than would be done by the wishes of the sections simply placed in juxtaposition. The deputies then cease to represent localities, and become the representatives of the nation. None can deny that something very different from the collection of the isolated sentiments of individuals is evolved from the union of individualities: the formation of the collective sentiment is one of the great mysteries of the moral world.[1]

[1] Mirabeau had been the first openly to deny, before the States of Provence, the right of any subdivision whatever of the kingdom to limit the national sovereignty,

Digitized by Google

The opening of the States-General, announced for April 29, did not take place until May 5. The famous procession on the eve of the opening, in which the King and the three orders figured together, — the peaceful inauguration of the era of tempests, — has been often described. Peace was manifested in the forms and rites: war was visible in things still more than in hearts; it was visible even in that humble and sombre costume imposed on the Third Estate by the insulting etiquette of the court, and worn with a pride which resembled defiance before the stage gilding and plumes that adorned the nobility.

The next day, May 5, the King opened the States by a few words, in which there was nothing striking but the total absence of initial action. When he put on his hat, on concluding, the members of the privileged orders followed his example, according to custom. Part of the members of the Third Estate did the same. A great commotion ran through the assembly. The King took off his hat, not daring to reject, and unwilling to authorize, the equality arrogated by the Third Estate. The time had gone by when the deputies of the people knelt at the arrival of the King!

The keeper of the seals made a flowery and generally vague harangue, in which he nevertheless appeared to approve of the vote by poll, if this change were effected with the free consent of the States-General. Necker was still less explicit in his lengthy speech, detailed to excess concerning the finances, and more philosophical and moral than political on all other matters. He counselled them to vote first by order, that the privileged classes might have the merit of voluntarily sacrificing their pecuniary exemptions; then of examining in what cases they could unite, and in what cases vote separately. This was puerile. The question should have been authoritatively decided. The powerlessness of the minister became evident after that of the King.

Before the question of the vote in common necessarily came that of the verification of the powers in common, which did not absolutely decide the second, but which had a strong bearing upon it. May 6, the ministry made an attempt to decide this question in point of fact according to the wishes of the Third Estate. A placard announced that *the locality designed for the*

"which resides in the collective representatives alone." Many enlightened men felt that imperative instructions led to an inextricable difficulty. The Third Estate, says the *cahier* of Nîmes, among others, "has set forth the wishes of the people: it has left to its deputies the care of modifying them." — *Résumé général des cahiers*, etc., t. III. p. 542.

Digitized by Google

reception of the deputies would be ready at nine in the morning. This locality was the great hall in which the opening session had been held.[1] The Third Estate repaired thither. The other orders did not appear. The Third Estate learned that they were assembled in the halls which had been assigned for their particular sessions.[2]

The Third Estate waited. At half-past two, it was informed that the clergy had just voted the separate verification by one hundred and thirty-three votes against one hundred and fourteen, and the nobility by one hundred and eighty-eight votes against forty-seven. The Third Estate considered these decisions as null and void, and the next morning, on the proposition of Mounier, *semi-officially* sent some of its members to invite the other deputies to unite with the commons, who were waiting for this union before beginning to verify the powers. The clergy, retracing their steps, proposed a mixed commission to examine the question anew, and suspended the verification which they had commenced (May 7). The nobility did not reply till May 12: they consented to appoint commissioners, but after having declared themselves legally organized by a majority of one hundred and ninety-three votes against thirty-one, which rendered the commission useless in advance.

The profound emotion that was manifested on the benches of the Third Estate indicated that the great struggle was approaching. A Breton deputy, Le Chapelier, proposed to notify the clergy and nobility that "the commons would recognize as legal representatives only those whose powers should have been examined by commissions appointed in general assembly; that, after the opening of the States, there were no longer any deputies of orders or provinces, but solely representatives of the nation; and that the deputies of the commons therefore invited the deputies of the clergy and the nobility to unite with them in the hall of the States, and to form themselves into States-General, for the

[1] This was the same *Salle des Menus* in which the two assemblies of the Notables had been held.

[2] The Third Estate, according to ancient usage, had no other place of meeting than the hall of the general sessions. This had been, as it were, a tacit avowal that the Third Estate was the body of the nation. The court had felt this inference, and had thought of assigning a particular locality to the Third Estate; but this project had been thwarted by a trifling circumstance. The administration of the stables would not give up a riding-school demanded by one of the ministers for the third hall. Whatever might have been done, however, the Third Estate was everywhere felt to be the nation.

Digitized by Google

purpose of verifying the powers of all the representatives of the nation." The majority wished to carry moderation to its farthest limits: it postponed as premature the motion of Le Chapelier, and accepted the conference with the other orders. The privileged orders announced their abandonment of their pecuniary exemptions: this was known in advance, and failed of effect. The conference none the less proved abortive, and the nobles maintained the separate verification of the powers (May 26). The clergy had not yet decided definitively. The Third Estate, on the proposition of Mirabeau, adjured them to range themselves "on the side of reason, justice, and truth."

The clergy were shaken. A great number of the curés and some of the bishops wished to respond to the appeal. The court interfered. May 28, a letter from the King requested the commissioners of the three orders to resume their conferences in the presence of the keeper of the seals and the royal commissioners. Louis XVI. had been the instrument of an intrigue plotted between the aristocratic prelates, the circle of the Queen, and that of the Count d'Artois (*the Polignac committee*). It was sought to prevent the union of the clergy, and to come to the aid of the nobility. The nobility on the same day decreed, by a majority of two hundred and two votes against sixteen, that deliberation by order, and the *veto* of each order, were *constitutional to the monarchy*. To accept the renewal of the conferences, after such an act, was derision on the part of the nobility. The Third Estate made a last effort at forbearance. M. Necker, who had taken his place among the royal commissioners, proposed that the powers should first be verified separately; that those only upon which difficulties arose should be referred to the commissioners of the three orders; and that, lastly, if the three orders could not agree, the decision of the contested election should be referred to the royal council. The clergy assented. The Third Estate, resolved to refuse, did not hasten to reply, and, to its great joy, was anticipated by the refusal of the nobility.[1] The conferences were closed (June 9).

The gauntlet was thrown down. June 10, the powerful political metaphysician who had put and resolved the question, *What is the Third Estate?* — the Abbé Sieyès, the deputy of the Third Estate of Paris, — proposed to address to the deputies of the clergy and the nobility a last *summons* to come to the hall of the States to concur in the common verification of the powers, with a notice

[1] Not a formal refusal, but a nominal acceptance on conditions which completely changed the plan.

Digitized by Google

that the general roll-call of the bailiwicks would be made within an *hour*, and that all who *failed to appear* would be *judged by default.*

The motion was almost unanimously adopted, with some mitigation of form: the word *invitation* was substituted for *summons*, a *day* for an *hour*, and *verification, whether present or absent*, for *judgment by default against those who failed to appear.*

The verification of the powers commenced on the evening of June 12. The nobility maintained their resolutions. The clergy deliberated without coming to a conclusion. From the 13th to the 15th, ten curés, among whom was the celebrated Grégoire, responded to the call of the Third Estate. "I come," said the Curé Marolle, the deputy of the clergy of Saint-Quentin, "to acknowledge the necessity of the common verification of the powers of a *national assembly.*" Others prepared to follow them; but the call of the bailiwicks was already ended, and the verification completed with respect to all the members who had answered the call.

The decisive moment had come. The assembly must be organized: under what title?

The destiny of a great system of society, of a whole political world, was suspended on a word! Since the first councils of Christendom, there had not been a discussion of like importance on earth.

Divers propositions were opposed to each other. A number of eminent men entered the lists; but the discussion was concentrated in reality upon two heads, — Sieyès and Mirabeau.[1]

"This assembly," said Sieyès, "is already composed of representatives sent by at least ninety-six hundredths of the nation. Such a body of deputations cannot be rendered inactive by the absence of the deputies of a few bailiwicks or a few classes of citizens. . . . The common work of national restoration may and should be commenced without delay by all the deputies present, *and they should pursue it without interruption as without obstacles.*" And he proposed the title of *Assembly of the known and verified Representatives of the French Nation.*

The form of this title was not a happy one. It was necessary to present to the masses simpler and more vivid forms, in which the idea was concentrated in a word, in a flash. But the idea

[1] The only notable proposition, apart from those of Sieyès and Mirabeau, was that of Mounier, who desired the meeting organized as *the legitimate assembly of the representatives of the majority of the nation, in the absence of the minority.*

Digitized by Google

was nevertheless evident to all who knew how to comprehend it. What he had written, Sieyès desired should be done. *The Third Estate was the Nation.* The language of Sieyès was calm, rigorous, and inflexible, like his pamphlet: that of Mirabeau broke forth in contradictory emotions, like the cry of a soul in conflict with itself.

Mirabeau attacked the division of *orders*, a word *devoid of meaning*, and inveighed against the pretension of the privileged classes to a collective veto and a separate action; yet he opposed any title which would be equivalent to that of the States-General, and would constitute the Third Estate alone the sovereign representative of the nation. "You will not have the sanction of the King: it is necessary to all that you are about to do. The people will not sustain you. They aspire as yet only to material relief, and will not understand political metaphysics. They would sell their rights for bread!" Mirabeau, who had so strongly opposed imperative instructions, went so far as to fall back on instructions which did not authorize the deputies to arrogate to themselves the title proposed by Sieyès! He conjured up spectacles of anarchy, despotism, and ruin, if open conflict were entered upon; and concluded by proposing the title of *Assembly of the Representatives of the People*, that is to say, of the plebeian masses.

The reason of this was, that the passionate writer, the stormy tribune, felt himself outstripped by the cold and trenchant logic of the political theorist. Although he had recognized national sovereignty and the principles of the *Social Contract* in his works, Mirabeau had always desired revolution with royalty. He felt that the sovereignty of the people was about to arise from the discussion, and to swallow up every thing; that revolution was about to be made without royalty; and, on accosting the realities themselves, he *saw the dream of a royal democracy vanish.* His mind discerned the unheard-of sufferings, the heroic calamities, through which France must pass to create for herself a new existence.[1] It was death between two lives. His mind was too clear-sighted, and his heart not sufficiently stoical, to brave this formidable future. He wished to arrest the movement, to compound with the past: for him, in turn, it was too late!

His proposition was rejected: the long-standing disdain of the privileged orders still weighed upon that great name, *the People.*

[1] A still obscure deputy, Barère, had just uttered a great speech: "You are called upon to begin history anew." — The *Point de Jour* (Barère's journal), No. 1.

Digitized by Google

The title of *Representatives of the People*, which another assembly was soon to render so terrible to the kings of Europe, was rejected as too humble.

The impetuous Mirabeau had recoiled. The impassible Sieyès rose, and pronounced the word of destiny: —

"I change my motion," he said: "I propose to substitute for the name of *known and verified Representatives* the title of NATIONAL ASSEMBLY."

The thunderbolt had rent the cloud. Light appeared. Four hundred and ninety-one votes against ninety adopted Sieyès' motion without restriction, and as an act of SOVEREIGNTY.

ANCIENT FRANCE WAS ENDED.

The Revolution was consummated by law. Nothing remained but to deduce the consequences. The society of the three orders was legally abolished by the representatives of the immense majority of the nation. Instead of privileged orders, there were only more or less distinguished citizens. Royalty was subordinated: it was no longer any thing but a political machine, the existence of which was not essential. The principle of the sovereignty of the nation one and indivisible had replaced the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV., and the ancient monarchy of the States-General and the parliaments, the sovereignty of the King, and the hierarchy of the privileged orders.

THE NEW WORLD HAD BEGUN.

Digitized by Google

CONCLUSION.[1]

FROM the summit of those stormy heights of '89 which separate two worlds, let us look backwards, to survey, at a glance, the destinies of ancient France, which contained all the presages of the future of modern France. The institutions, the customs, the social forms, have disappeared: the essential groundwork, the nature of France, has not changed. It is still the same being, as it were, which continues, and will continue, to develop in the good or bad use of its own energies. Modern France, ancient France, Gaul, are one and the same moral person. France existed long before calling itself France, — a baptismal and adopted name, under which its natural name has become extinct.

From the origin of historic times, the soil of France appears peopled by a lively, witty, imaginative, and eloquent race; inclined at once to faith and to doubt, to the exaltation of the soul, and the allurement of the senses; enthusiastic and derisive; spontaneous and logical; sympathetic, and restive to discipline; endowed with practical sense, and inclined to illusions; more disposed to brilliant acts of devotion than to patient and continued efforts; fickle as to facts and persons, persevering as to the essential tendencies and conduct of life; alike active and comprehensive; loving to know fo the sake of knowing, and to act for the sake of acting; loving war above all else, less for conquest than for glory and adventure, the attraction of danger and of what is unknown; uniting, in fine, to an extreme sociability, an indomitable individuality, and a spirit of independence which absolutely rejected the yoke of external realities and fatal forces.

In this antique society were developed, on a primitive, patriarchal foundation, two dominant principles, the religious principle and the heroic principle, combined in a belief in the highest degree calculated to *cultivate strength*,[2] according to one of its own maxims, and to inspire men with contempt for death by the

[1] Written in 1854.

[2] "Honor the Gods; do no evil to others; cultivate *strength*." — Druidical Triad, cited by Diogène de Laërte.

Digitized by Google

certainty of living again. The Gallic belief, Druidism, soaring above the wholly terrestrial religions of Greece and Rome, presented, in the recesses of the West, a theological and philosophical development equal to that of the great religious systems of the East, but in a spirit decidedly opposed to Indo-Egyptian Pantheism, and which appears to have had a moral affinity only with the *mazdeism* of Zoroaster. The victorious conflict of liberty and will with the fatal powers, and the indestructible human individuality rising progressively from the lowest degree of being, by *knowledge* and *strength*, to the undefined summits of heaven, without ever becoming confounded in the Creator, — such appear to have been the bases of the Druidical faith, and the secret of Gallic intrepidity and independence. The firmest, the clearest, the most fully developed notion of the immortality and the destiny of the soul was the essential characteristic of the Bardic philosophy, the offspring of the Druids.

Such a race, resting on so formidable a lever, seemed destined to invade the world. It swept over the earth triumphantly, agitated, astonished, and terrified it, but did not rule it in a lasting manner. It had within itself the materials for a great nation: it was not a nation. These materials lacked the cement necessary to hold them together. This religion inspired a wholly individual strength: it did not teach social duty with the authority of those local and wholly terrestrial religions which reposed on the divinity of the country; neither had it within itself that flame of divine and human love, of universal charity, which it was reserved for Christianity to diffuse over the world. The forces of Gaul did not work together harmoniously, and turned against themselves. These powerful individualities ended only in a weak and anarchical society. The patriarchal tribes grouped together into warlike democracies, subject to the moral authority of a great priesthood recruited by affiliation, — a learned corporation, and not an hereditary caste. It was the apogee of ancient Gaul; but this state did not continue. Social inequality increased: the local aristocracies grew with the progress of wealth, and monopolized the advantages of civilization, which developed imperfectly. Influences became hereditary: the tribes divided into clans, grouped around a few powerful men; and there finally ceased to be but two classes of importance in Gaul, — the Druids and the Knights, or, to speak in modern parlance, the clergy and the nobility, who disputed the power with each other, and agreed only in rejecting hereditary royalty, antipathetic to the genius of Gaul.

Digitized by Google

The decline rapidly advanced; the moral elasticity became weakened, the people enervated, the nobility a prey to intestine dissensions. Foreigners advanced. Gaul was invaded on one side by the most strongly organized political and military system of civilization that had ever appeared upon earth; on the other, by a barbarism systematically hostile to all development, all wealth, and all progress. Of the two competitors, Rome prevailed over Germania. The dissensions of Gaul, despite tardy and desperate efforts, threw her under the sword of the conqueror. The prestige of Helleno-Latin civilization completed the work of conquest. The nobility became Latinized, and blended with Roman society: the sacerdotal body was proscribed. The superstitions of the South invaded Gaul, where they would leave their traces only in the classic form of literature and the arts. The political genius of Rome entered more thoroughly into the Gallic nature, and sensibly modified it: it gave our fathers order, discipline, moderation, gravity, and circumspection, the administrative and centralizing spirit with its great advantages in the external organization of society, and also its perilous tendency to substitute mechanism for life in the body politic. Latin materialism was destined also to leave too many vestiges among us, by combining with the critical and derisive tendency, which counterbalances, as it were, our tendency to enthusiasm.

We owe to Rome, by way of compensation, a progress of a higher order than an aptitude for material organization; namely, the introduction of that Roman law, transformed by Greek philosophy, which became in so many respects *written reason* and the *code of humanity*, and which enlightened and enlarged the generous instincts of our primitive local laws. To *Roman unity*, to *Roman peace*, also belongs the merit of having prepared the ground for the religion of *love and union*, Christianity, to germinate and grow. The gospel at last manifested in the West that *spirit of life*, that double principle of love in God and the Mediator-Word, which Druidism had lacked to vivify its sublime notions of human destiny. Gaul found again in Christianity, with a higher idea of the divine nature, that certainty of human immortality, if not that vast system of the destinies of the soul, which distinguished it among all other nations. It embraced the new faith, and speedily exercised a lofty and salutary influence over the formation of dogmas; it powerfully contributed to repel the Montanist and Gnostic heresies; and attempted, by the organ of its great apostle, St. Martin of Tours, to stifle in the germ the

Digitized by Google

fatal principle of religious persecution which was to cover Christianity with blood and crime during long ages! It defended the Trinity against Arius; and, faithful to its tradition, attempted to defend liberty against St. Augustine.

Christianity and the Roman law did not suffice, however, to insure the existence of the Empire, or to revive the nationalities which it had absorbed. Both cosmopolitan (and this was their glory), they addressed themselves to the human race. Something more was needed upon earth: nations were needed among whom might be apportioned the different functions of the human race. The transitional work of the Roman empire was accomplished, since Religion and Law were born, and were sure of surviving it. The barbarians, whom Providence had warded off five centuries before, now might come.

They came: the Empire was dismembered. Gaul, unable to regain an independent existence by itself alone, at least made a choice among its conquerors: it gave itself to the Franks, and rejected the other barbarians. The Frankish race, as valiant as the Gauls in their most heroic age, became the sword of orthodox Christianity against the Arian barbarians, and the *Trinitarian* bishops shared the dominion of Gaul with the kings of the Franks. The times when the Druids and the warrior-chieftains reigned together were again beheld, a shade more monarchical, however, since the military command was now concentrated among the members of a single family. This was, nominally, primitive FRANCE,—Gallo-Germano-Roman France. The Franks formed the cement thereof, and gave it their name, which it was never to lose. The different elements of the French nationality were now in juxtaposition; but the French nationality was not yet born. There was, as yet, neither a French people nor a French language. This *first France* was yet only Frankish Gaul; that is, the third phase of our origin: and it must even be added, that those Franks from whom we derive our name were destined to leave among us infinitely fewer traces than the Romans; they did little more than revive in Gaul those of the Gallic elements which corresponded to the Germanic elements: as to the characteristics especially peculiar to the Germanic race, we retained almost nothing of them, unless in a few of the northern and eastern provinces.

Frankish Gaul had two periods: the first was that of the Merovingians, the allies of the Gallic bishops, and the conquerors of the Arian Goths; the second was that of the Carolingians,

Digitized by Google

the conquerors of the Saracens and the Saxons, and the allies of the Roman Papacy. They saved Europe from Moslem invasion, made a conquest of Germania for Christianity, and reëstablished the Roman empire in behalf of the Franks, supported by the popes, who conferred on Frankish royalty a semi-sacerdotal character by the revival of the ancient Hebraic coronation, and who received from it, in exchange, a decisive support in their spiritual pretensions and their temporal aggrandizement.

The germs of nationality, which were striving to grow, were stifled for some time beneath that cumbersome Frankish empire which enveloped, with Gaul, all Germania, a part of the Slavic regions, three-fourths of Italy, and the north of Spain: but this factitious unity, despite the coöperation of the clergy, who desired a single empire like a single faith, was broken by the instincts of the peoples; and, from the dismemberment of the empire of Charlemagne, at length arose the modern nations, the revival of the great races of antiquity under a new form.

This time, it was finally France; no longer Germanic France, but *Welsh* France; as it is called by the Germans, Gallic France. The Franks were confounded in the Gallo-Roman masses: there were no longer either *Romans* or *Barbarians*, but *Frenchmen*, with the sign of a peculiar idea, a national function,—a new language, at first called *Roman*, or Neo-Roman, on account of the preponderance of Latin in our vocabulary, which the Church had so much contributed to secure: this language would become less and less *Roman;* and the logical and metaphysical genius of Gaul, aroused in the philosophy of the Middle Ages, would give it, by degrees, a form wholly *sui generis*.

France, meanwhile, had appeared on the point of perishing in its birth. It seemed as if, with the empire of the Franks, all society was about to be dissolved. Anarchy prevailed everywhere. The Norman pirates, who ravaged France unceasingly, seemed vultures preying upon a corpse. A predestined city, Paris, at length arrested these latest barbarians, who became a part of Christian society in turn, as the Franks had done; and the centre of the body politic of France was formed around Paris, in that basin of the Seine so happily planned by Nature. The feudal world emerged from the chaos of the ninth century.

Its roots struck deep into the past. It was an ancient Celtic groundwork revived by the Germans. Fancy the primordial element of Gallic society, the tribe, effaced, and the secondary element, clanship, left alone, and attached to the soil, and you

Digitized by Google

have the feudal régime. The hierachy of fiefs was simply a hierarchy of clans, placed one above another, and ending in a supreme chief, the King, whom the feudal nobility wished to maintain elective like the ancient chiefs or magistrates of the Gallic tribes, and who was rendered hereditary only by the logical consequences of a certain analogy of situation,[1] and by the support of the Church, alike in favor of monarchy and of primogenitureship.

Feudalism was a hierarchy of faith and honor, of conditional and free services among the feudatories; a hierarchy of oppression and iniquity to all who were not of the warrior and feudal caste, and who were considered as outside of the law. It tended to absorb the clergy in its ranks, and to thrust back simple freemen into the condition of serfs of the glebe, much more harshly treated than among the ancient Gauls.

From the midst of this régime, the name of which remains so unpopular among us, nevertheless was evolved an ideal worthy of admiration, and respected by the classes and generations most hostile to feudalism, — the chivalric ideal, that is, protection to the weak and the oppressed, assigned as an aim to heroism; fraternal equality among the warriors devoted to this Christian work; a wholly new conception of love, by which constancy in love became a religion like honor; a marvellous outgrowth of the Gallic genius fructified by Christian inspiration.[2] From the same sources, at once Celtic and Christian, sprang the mediæval art, — that unheard-of aspiration of the soul towards heaven; an art in which neither Papal Rome nor Germania can claim a share, and wholly French, like chivalric poetry.[3] While the sentiment of France manifested itself with such power, its thought was disciplined in the rude gymnasium of scholastic philosophy, another product of our soil.[4]

In the thirteenth century, French society of the Middle Ages was in its greatest lustre. By its poetry, art, and scholastic philosophy; by its external action on England, Italy, Spain, and the East; by the leadership of the crusades, that great European re-

[1] Hereditary transmission being the principle on which the fiefs were based, the highest fief necessarily tended to become hereditary like the rest.

[2] See our vol. III. p. 351, *et seq.*, concerning the primitive types of the romances of chivalry, written in the Celtic language.

[3] The distinguishing shade between these two great manifestations is, that the poetry is more aristocratic, and the art more democratic.

[4] Scholastic philosophy did not belong to us as exclusively as chivalric poetry and ogival architecture; but it had its great centre at Paris.

Digitized by Google

action against Islamism, — it had placed itself at the head of Christendom. Feudalism having failed in absorbing the clergy, and subjugating the freemen of the towns, a new element had made room for itself by the side of the two ecclesiastical and aristocratic elements. A multitude of petty, municipal republics had arisen amidst the numerous donjons and steeples of the manor-houses and monasteries. Royalty had grown: Janus was three-faced. The King was the head of the fiefs, the heir of the Frankish monarchs, to the nobility; the anointed of the Lord, to the clergy; the representative of the Roman Cæsar, of the régime of civil equality under one master, to the legists, who reappeared in turn in this new world.

This system of society attained its relative perfection at the beginning of the fourteenth century. At that time, what was called the French Constitution was fully organized. The bourgeois and vassal republics became the bourgeoisie, the Third Estate; and, in the States-General, the Third Estate figured by the side of the nobility and the clergy. There were no longer two political orders as at the time of the invasion of Cæsar, at the time of the Frankish empire, and at the beginning of feudalism: there were three. The clergy represented science; the nobility, martial strength; the Third Estate, free labor. Royalty was unity superadded to this triplicity: it represented the nationality as a whole. From the origin of this institution, one might have discerned by what cause it would some day fall. This artificial disruption of the national functions, at the very moment when it was solemnly organized, no longer corresponded to the exact reality. The legists, the head of the Third Estate, disputed the scientific domain with the clergy; and neither was the Third Estate excluded from arms.

The Constitution of the *Three Estates* began, however, with grandeur by affirming the national independence against the cosmopolitan pretensions of the papacy, which claimed the succession of the Cæsars. The system of Gregory VII. was definitively shattered by the Three Estates of France.

The political constitution was scarcely fixed when the foundation of the nationality itself was assailed. England, that new society so nearly related to our own, and formed of a triple Celtic, Saxon, and Franco-Norman element,[1] precipitated itself

[1] England is especially, in reality, a Gallo-Teutonic people, as France is, especially, a Gallo-Roman people; with this difference, that in France the Roman element was only a form modifying the Gallic substratum, while in England the Teutonic element (Saxon and Danish) combined largely with the primitive stratum which it covered.

Digitized by Google

upon France, and attempted in its turn to impose masters upon the latter, as it had received them thence. The decline of feudalism was evident at the first encounter. The French nobility was conquered. The Third Estate made a first effort to possess itself of the national destinies: it failed. Foreign and civil war united to dismember France. The great nobles precipitated the ruin of the State. The foreigners were in Paris. Every thing seemed lost. Royalty, clergy, nobility, bourgeoisie, all were lifeless, or were rending each other in the death-struggle.

Salvation came from the lowest depths of the people, — from among the husbandmen and the shepherds. The mysterious genius of Gaul awakened in the soul of a child, — a young girl inspired by Heaven, who took up the sword which had fallen from the hands of the strong, and drove the conquerors before her like a flock struck with terror. Betrayed by the King, whose crown she had restored, by the nobility, whose affronts she had effaced, and by the clergy, who failed to recognize in her the messenger of the Lord, the Messiah of the nationality, she repeated Calvary, and, by her Passion, redeemed France.

The work of deliverance was finished. France rose transformed and revivified from that immense crisis which had well-nigh destroyed her. The great political and military feudal system had fallen. The Third Estate was strengthened socially; but the political advantage reverted to royalty, which revived, supported by a standing army and a permanent tax, by the aid of which it was speedily able to postpone, and later to abolish, in fact, the States-General and the constitution left without guarantees. Royalty held under its immediate tenure the greater part of the ancient Gallic soil. Wars and alliances, alike successful, had gradually brought almost all the great fiefs into the hands of the King.

The Middle Ages were no more. Their idea was exhausted. Their arts were extinct or transformed. A spirit at once antique and modern spread over Europe. Greek and Roman antiquity revived, to preside over the first phase of the modern world, emerged from the too narrow circle in which Christianity had been imprisoned since the Fathers of the Church. Secular science emancipated itself from ecclesiastical science, to march to the conquest of the laws of Nature, and of that boundless universe of which the Middle Ages had been ignorant. Royalty seconded this impulse of civilization, but made the latter pay dearly for its services by ceasing to labor for the complement of the national territory, in order to plunge France into mad and unjust wars of

Digitized by Google

conquest abroad. In the midst of these wars, France was seized with the religious crisis which rent Christendom in twain in the sixteenth century. She, the initiator of Europe during all the Middle Ages, the mediator between the North and the South, this time lost the initiative: she was disputed as a prey between the North and the South, between the Pope and Luther, between Rome and Germany, as in the time of Cæsar! Would not the genius of Gaul give its own solution, its own affirmation, in this great debate?

It gave its solution, indeed, long after, but a solution of prudence, of preservation rather than of affirmation, a solution insufficient to impose its authority on the two parties, and to give the world a new impulse, namely, Gallicanism, which guaranteed France, it is true, from sharing the profound decline of Spain and Italy, and which refused infallibility to the Roman pontiff, but which recognized his supremacy and spiritual direction, and consequently maintained the subordination of the religious spirit of France to an external authority. Gallicanism did not prevent France from being swept away in the frightful whirlwind of the religious wars, and becoming the battle-field of the two European factions. A royal race was sunk in blood and degradation. The nationality was again in peril. The formidable leader of the papal party, the Austro-Spanish monarch, strove to absorb France. She tore herself from his hands. A hero repulsed the *Demon of the South*, and closed the religious wars by recognizing religious liberty in favor of the new Christian sects, and treading under foot the system of persecution which had perverted the gospel and tyrannized over Christendom for the last six centuries.

Royalty, for a moment overpowered and submerged, reorganized itself in altogether new conditions of strength and activity, and again became the energetic expression of the nationality. The anarchy of the princes and nobles which had raised its head was crushed forever. France regained the initiative, and speedily the preponderance, in Europe, with extraordinary splendor. She vigorously resumed the offensive against the House of Austria. She recommenced the work of her territorial completion, and saved Protestantism and the liberty of the human mind in Germany. She founded the European balance of power which dispelled the dream of universal monarchy inherited from the Cæsars by the popes, the emperors, and the House of Austria, and which

Digitized by Google

contained the idea of nationalities equal, independent, and fraternally associated; that is, the future of the world.

The initiative was reconquered with the same power in things of the mind. The heroic personality of the Gallic genius had given in the fifteenth century, by Jeanne Darc, its most sublime manifestation in the domain of sentiment: it manifested itself not less solemnly, in the seventeenth century, in the domain of reason. Descartes regenerated philosophy, and the human mind itself, by extricating it from the weight of ancient authorities, of tradition accumulated for centuries, and stripping it naked, so to speak, in order to revivify it by plunging it into its eternally living spring. Reason was freed. Liberty reigned in the sphere of abstract ideas: it would descend into the sphere of realities. Poetry soared on high with a flight equal to that of philosophy. The same genius of liberty and will inspired the immortal ideal of Corneille.

Minds, powerfully reinvigorated, proceeded with like energy in all directions. Letters, which gave to France its great age, the rival of the ages of Pericles and Augustus, art, war, administration, manufactures,—all were personified in strongly marked individualities; all were imprinted with the stamp of active reason, brilliant and solid intellect, and determined will. Royalty, in its apogee, towered above all this splendor, to which the nobility brought great captains for its quota, and the bourgeoisie great writers and great administrators. The Gallican church also placed at the service of royalty the rarest gifts of genius. All Europe followed in the train of France, and modelled itself after her image. For the second time, France offered to history a complete society. The thirteenth century had been an adolescent society: the seventeenth century was a mature society. The change in the language expressed this difference. The French of the Renaissance, complete in the seventeenth century, as the Roman-French had been in the thirteenth century, was less sweet and stronger: precision and metaphysical lucidity replaced simplicity therein.

Sources of decay secretly undermined this greatness. The constitution of the Three Estates had perished as a political constitution: it was no longer any thing but a civil régime, a classification of the citizens into bodies separated by different privileges and laws. All political power was concentrated in the King. The consequences of absolute monarchy were not long in unfolding themselves. Abroad, the moderating action of France

Digitized by Google

threatened to become tyranny, and caused the reaction of Europe against the tendencies to universal monarchy, the revival of which it thought that it discerned in the very nation which had founded the European balance of power. Within, the principle of unity was carried to extremes. The local liberties, which had formerly sustained the vitality in the different parts of the nation, were stifled in behalf, not of national liberty, but of despotism. Lastly, by a false and fatal logic, a religious unity was deduced from political unity, the thoughts from the acts of man. Descartes had not touched upon religious dogmas in his metaphysical revolution. The old spirit of religious persecution revived in the midst of an era of reason and immense intellectual development. Almost a whole generation was drawn into this insensate contradiction by the love of uniformity; a monstrous exaggeration of the *collective* spirit of Gaul. Liberty of conscience was abolished. Men retrograded a century. Under the pretext of unity, society was rent asunder, and France was mutilated.

The punishment came. Enfeebled France was three times forced to stand the shock of formidable coalitions, which exhausted her resources and genius. Reverses succeeded the long series of her victories. She saved her territory only by desperate efforts, and emerged diminished from her struggle against Europe. The decline of the monarchy, of the Gallican church, and of the monarchical nobility which had replaced the ancient feudal nobility, had commenced. This decline advanced with terrible rapidity. An effort had been made to enforce external unity in religion: the result had been hypocrisy. Hypocrisy was succeeded by shamelessness: materialism threw off the mask. The springs of power had been stretched to arbitrariness: these springs had become strained. The invincible royalty of the seventeenth century was nothing more in the eighteenth century than a cavilling and impotent despotism, which had no longer the strength to be tyranny. France was delivered over to a government of intriguers and abandoned women, which called to mind the reign of the eunuchs at Byzantium and among the kings of the East. Diplomacy was rendered void like all else. Impolitic and ill-conducted wars ended in ignominy. A great colonial empire was lost. Poland was left to perish. The body politic and the body social became disjointed amidst sterile agitation. The court of Versailles repeated the last days of those antique empires of Asia which expired amidst the delirium of orgies. "*After us the deluge!*" This saying of the King was repeated with a common

Digitized by Google

voice by the nobility, by the higher clergy, by the financiers, by all the upper classes of society.

The *deluge* was approaching indeed: smothered murmurs were descending from the heavens, and rising from the depths of the earth; and the distant rumbling of the winds that sweep away empires was beginning to be heard. The philosophy of the eighteenth century was born.

After the practical materialism of the Regency came sensualistic philosophy; the offspring, and not the parent, of the moral decomposition; the negation of the whole past, under all its aspects, good or bad. The critical spirit of our race, and also its practical sense and profound humanity, were personified with unheard-of power in Voltaire. Cartesian philosophy, so great and so national, was incomplete. On the one hand, it had not touched directly on either politics or religion, although its method was applicable to them as to all else; on the other, this method had not given a place, by the side of Reason, to that other principle of certainty, Sentiment, without which Reason is so quickly arrested. By this breach entered the philosophy of sensation, — the English school of Locke. The innovators who attacked the beliefs and institutions of the past did so with the weapons of Locke, instead of the surer weapons of Descartes, and made sovereign Reason the handmaid of Sensation. The Christian Deism of Locke, become Epicurean Deism in Voltaire, ended in pure scepticism or naturalistic Pantheism in the Encyclopedic sect. By a logic which drew on this school, despite itself, selfishness was the final conclusion in ethics, and a materialistic and negative democracy in politics.

A new athlete appeared, bearing on his brow, furrowed by passions and sufferings, that mark of divine things which had hitherto been lacking to his age. Through Rousseau, Sentiment, restored to Philosophy, brought back thither the primordial truths, God and the immortality of the soul. In politics, Rousseau, the apostle of the sovereignty of the people, reëstablished the democratic ideal upon the bases of spiritualistic morality and the duties of the citizen, without disregarding, but without sufficiently insuring, the reservation of human individuality in the presence of society. Unhappily, carried away by the stationary ideal of the antique republics, and by the reaction against the refinements of a corrupt civilization, he denied perfectibility, affirmed even by those who were prevented by their materialism from establishing the doctrine thereof upon its true foundations. These philosophers allied an inconceivable enthusiasm and aspiration to the opinions least

Digitized by Google

fitted to sustain the soul. They were much better than their doctrines. From amidst their errors was evolved an immense movement of humanity, justice, practical reason, scientific spirit, and improvements of all kinds. Impious in words, they were in some sort religious in heart and action,—a strange contrast to the epochs when the mind confesses truth, while the lifeless heart does not practise goodness. The men of the eighteenth century believed in nothing, for the most part, beyond this world; but they filled the world with so many hopes, that it seemed to them to suffice for the human race. Rousseau did not share their illusions. The germs of a new world existed, indeed, in this chaos; but with how much blood and how many tears were they to be watered, and during how many generations, before blossoming in the unknown domain which was to be revealed by the future!

A great attempt was made peacefully to transform the ancient régime. A fraction of the philosophers, who sought to found the theory of *wealth* and *progress*, and all social and political economy, upon the principle of property, arrived at power. They entered upon a reformation designed to end in a king, at the head of a body politic of landed proprietors, in which the three orders were to be absorbed. Royalty dared not test to the end this last chance of safety. At the same time that it clung to the old abuses, impelled by public opinion, it aided, despite itself, in the birth of a new republican world beyond the seas. After this distant diversion, it found itself again in collision with aggravated perils at home. The ruin of the finances was consummated. It was impossible longer to maintain the hierarchy of privileges and abuses. Royalty, at the last extremity, with a faltering hand attacked the institutions of inequality. The privileged orders replied by assaults upon absolutism. The ancient régime rent itself asunder with its own hands. Driven from one position to another, agitated and bewildered, royalty suffered an appeal to the nation to be wrung from it. The States-General were convoked after an interval of a hundred and seventy-five years. The three orders were face to face. The Third Estate summoned the other two orders to unite with it. Upon their refusal, it declared itself the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY; that is, the NATION by itself alone.

ANCIENT FRANCE, as we have said,—ancient France was ended.

The two privileged orders had no longer any reason for existing. The scientific and moral leadership had escaped from the

Digitized by Google

clergy, and fallen into the hands of secular thinkers and scholars.[1] The warrior-caste, endangered in the very foundation of its existence by the establishment of a standing army, had become useless to the national defence. The Third Estate had within itself all the elements of a complete society. As to royalty, it had been only the symbol of unity: now the living unity set itself up, and claimed at once the principle and the exercise of its sovereignty.

A moment subjugated by that celestial inspiration which swept over France, the representatives of the privileged orders, on the night of August 4, responded to the appeal of the representatives of the people by burning upon the altar of unity the title-deeds of a reign of ten centuries, — a night whose sacred darkness brought forth inspirations unexampled in history, impulses which the sympathetic genius of France could alone give as a spectacle to the universe! At the moment of being swallowed up in unity, the privileged orders rose, by a last effort, to the height of their antique virtue, and ennobled their end by rendering it voluntary. Human weakness, passions, the return of selfish regrets, will have in vain disowned this immortal night: history will record an impulse sublime even in those who knew not how to sustain their aspiration.

The abolition of hereditary and privileged nobility, together with primogenitureship and entails; the establishment of the equal division of property in the family; the suppression of feudal rights, and all the institutions pertaining thereto; the establishment of the civil status apart from the clergy; the abolition of canonical law, and the civil sanction of religious vows; the suppression of the ecclesiastical order as a body politic, and the sale of its immense estates at retail in order to generalize landed property; the destruction and annihilation of all privileges of corporations, families, and offices; all provincial, municipal, judicial, and fiscal diversities; all appropriation of social functions; all differences of origin among property; and all conditions restricting the freedom to labor and to acquire, — such were the immediate and definitive results of June 17 and August 4, 1789; results to which were speedily added, in the moral domain, the liberty of conscience and of worship, a principle of law, and no longer a simple compromise between armed sects, as the Edict of Nantes had been; and, in the material domain, with a new division of territory which swept away all traces of the feudal or absolute mon-

[1] Would it not have been thus, had there been no motive for the clergy to continue to form a political body ruled by separate laws?

Digitized by Google

archy, that unity of weights and measures which is the economic unity of France, and an example offered to the world of the application of lofty scientific methods to the regulation of the usages of life.

The levelling influence of the Revolution was felt everywhere. Nothing remained standing but the nation on one side, and the individual on the other.[1] The vast edifice of the social hierarchy crumbled in fewer days than it had taken centuries to build it. France was about to set to work upon a new form and organism. The more we meditate upon the meaning of that event which the universe has so well styled the REVOLUTION,—as if all the other revolutions of the globe and of humanity were effaced before this one,— the more we are impressed with its immensity. There is nothing comparable to it in the history of the human race. The majority of the systems of society had hitherto been seen to perish, either by a violent death or by languor, when their organism was dissolved: a few had been seen gradually to transform their organs; but never had the world beheld a nation undertaking to reconstitute itself *à priori* in the name of absolute right and pure reason, and, so to speak, the soul of a great people throwing off a worn-out chrysalis, and setting to work to reconstruct a new body! The Revolution repeated in the social order the work accomplished by Descartes in philosophy; and, extricating itself from the sophisms of infidelity, by that cry which men assembled never fail to raise to heaven, it dedicated its enterprise to the Supreme Being.[2]

What had been dimly discerned in an heroic burst of enthusiasm, it was necessary to attain by patient strength. The Revolution had sought to suppress time and tradition. It was necessary to resume the one, and to submit to the conditions of the other. The sovereignty of the people was reconquered; that is, the inalienable right of society to modify itself at its pleasure, without being chained to any forms or any persons. The principle was reconquered; but the question was, to know what to do with this principle: the idea was nothing, if not vivified by the spirit.

What was modern France to do? Instead of a society, which, with its royalty and its three orders, was complete only by disrupting the man, France was to constitute the *complete man in*

[1] And the commune, it may be added, the primitive and indestructible group.
[2] Constitution of 1791. — *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen.*

Digitized by Google

complete society.[1] For more than sixty years, France has been seeking this promised land.

In the civil domain, great results have been definitively acquired; in the political and moral domain, conquests not less brilliant have been many times made, and again lost; we have passed through gigantic alternations of progress and reaction; prodigious flights have been followed by long and profound exhaustion. The eighteenth century gave an impulse of immense boldness; but it did not leave moral resources sufficient to sustain this impulse to the end: and the nineteenth century has not yet succeeded in worthily continuing its predecessor while rectifying and completing it. Unhappy influences have disturbed the inheritance of the Revolution. False prophets have misled minds. Aspirations at times generous, but bewildered, cosmopolitan and pantheistic theories, have shaken free individuality and patriotism. Our generation has found itself disputed between the phantoms of the past and the visions of a future contrary to the genius of France. Seized with torpor after these violent struggles, it seems to abandon itself: it suffers itself passively to be carried away by the reflex of retrogressive doctrines, — one kind of powerlessness led captive by another; and regains its energy, only for the worship of material interests enveloped in a sort of practical fatalism.

Let us beware! Peoples are fallible and responsible like individuals. There is no fatality, no *unconquerable force of circumstances*, by which destinies are accomplished of themselves. These are the morbid visions of days of decay, wherein souls, the real beings, abdicating their functions, dream of some indescribable fantastic machine which replaces by its mechanism free and voluntary activity. There are only two *forces* in the moral world, — the will of Providence, and the will of man. Providence is unceasingly doing its work among us: man is no longer doing his.[2] Providence has been making appeal after appeal to France during the last sixty years. France commenced well; but does she continue to respond? What Providence asks of us is not the abdication of ourselves, is not puerile imitations of the past, senile reminiscences of the Middle Ages, but virile acts; the awakening

[1] This beautiful formula belongs to M. Pierre Leroux, whom, unhappily, it has not preserved from systems in which man could not be *complete*, since free individuality is not insured therein.

[2] Written in 1854. Since this time, France has begun again to be found on glorious battle-fields; but she must recover her spirit as well as her sword.

Digitized by Google

of the spirit of life and liberty, the awakening of right and duty, of devotion to truth and justice; faith by works; a religious renovation, proceeding from the eternal truths which the human mind has received from God, and not from human combinations worn out and swept away by the course of ages; a social development which seeks equality and justice through fraternity, without thinking of changing the natural and necessary bases of societies, or of inventing a man other than that whom God has made. Let us beware! Providence may weary: there are no infallible destinies. No one is necessary to God. The Master may transfer to others the inheritance neglected by the unfaithful servant. Let France look at Spain and Italy, buried for three centuries in a sepulchre from which such efforts are now being made to roll away the stone!

Race of the Gauls, innovating race whose roots strike so deep into the past, sound thy heart, and recognize thyself! Do not look outside thyself: long since hast thou ceased to be under the traditions of the Germans. The cycle of Roman education, in turn, has ended for thee; the genius of worn-out Rome has nothing more to teach thee: it would stifle thee beneath its despotic discipline, which purchases material progress and a superficial unity at the cost of moral life and human dignity. Interrogate thy own genius, transformed by the Christian Word. Thou who hast formerly developed in the world the sentiment and the doctrine of immortality, — it suffices for thee to see thy image reflected in its source, to cast from thee the polluted winding-sheet in which thou hast been enveloped by materialism. Seize anew that *primordial inspiration*, that *memory of thine own*, that *indestructible individuality*, which God, according to a profound interpretation of thy antique recollections, has given to every being on creating him. Repeat the saying of the sage, — KNOW THYSELF! — and thou wilt be saved.

FINIS.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

FOR the valuable notes which compose this Appendix, and form so interesting an addition to the American portion of this work, we are indebted to the kindness of Henry B. Dawson, Esq., of Morrisania, N.Y., member of the Historical Societies of New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Wisconsin, and of the New-England Historic-Genealogical Society; the well-known author of "Battles of the United States by Sea and Land," "Sons of Liberty in New York," "Assault on Stony Point," etc., and editor of the "Fœderalist." These notes have been made with the entire approbation of M. Martin, who is anxious that his work should be complete upon a ground whereon a foreign writer, whose access to the fullest sources of information would necessarily be in some degree limited, might easily be mistaken as to details. We would also acknowledge with gratitude the kind assistance of Mr. Dawson in the preparation of all the portion of the translation relating to the American Revolution. — TR.

I.

Page 365, lines 26–28: "*From that time, it could be seen that there was a chasm between Old England and this infant nationality, — between a society of fact and tradition, and a society of right and reason.*"

The American Revolution can be traced back to a much earlier date than 1764; and the passage of the Stamp Act, the first cause for *general* complaint, served rather to consolidate a series of elements which were antagonistic to the government, than to originate a new one where it had been before unknown.

From the earliest days of the English colonies in New England, the colonists assumed to be, politically, what was denied by the Home Government. Two distinct nationalities — one a conqueror, the other a conquered people, and therefore antagonistic — peopled New York and portions of New Jersey; and, in the other colonies, other causes, often temporary and local in their character, served to irritate, and produce an opposition among those who were impatient of governmental control and ministerial interference.

In New York, so determined was the opposition of the Dutch as early as 1664, that the government was obliged to abandon some of its measures (*Minutes of Common Council of New York*, Oct. 14 and 20, 1664); and, from that time until the opening of the war in 1775, New York led the republican elements of the continent in their opposition to the old systems of government and to the usurpations of authority by the servants of the King in America (*Sons of Liberty in New York*, a paper read before the New-York Historical Society, May 3, 1859).

It is proper to observe, however, that while the governments in the several colonies, from an early date, had been constantly engaged in as many series of

Digitized by Google

local struggles with the colonists in America, there had been no *general* grievance, and consequently no *general*, united, or concerted opposition, among the latter, until the passage of the Stamp Act in March, 1765.

That indiscreet measure fell among the colonists in every part of America with equal violation of their rights; and while those of them who possessed royal charters appealed to those instruments, and demanded a recognition of their "chartered rights," New York — a conquered, and therefore an unchartered province — joined her sister colonies in the joint demand for their rights, under the plea that the "rights of man" had been invaded by the act in question.

While it may be proper, therefore, to consider the Stamp Act as the signal for a *concerted* and *united* opposition to the government, it is not proper to refer to it as the origin of the American Revolution, since that great work had been in progress in each of the colonies almost from the beginning of their existence; and a concentration of its power had been prevented only by the policy of the government in giving no general cause for complaint until the adoption of this measure.

II.

Page 365, lines 33–36: "*The Presbyterians, animated by democratic sentiments, had taken advantage of the prevailing agitation to organize themselves into a general association, which they had always been prevented from doing: this religious association became a vigorous political instrument.*"

It is evident, that, in the construction of these lines, the author was controlled by the royalist writers of that period, by whom, very often, all who opposed the government, whether they were republicans or monarchists in sentiment, were indiscriminately styled "Presbyterians," notwithstanding the great body of those in New England who thus resisted the ministry were "Congregationalists" and "Baptists;" those in New York were principally "Reformed Dutch" and "Baptists," with a few "Presbyterians;" those in Pennsylvania were generally "German Reformed;" those in Maryland were almost exclusively "Roman Catholics" and "Episcopalians;" and those in Virginia and the Carolinas were principally of the latter denomination and "Baptists."

It is noteworthy in this connection also, that while the meeting-houses of the Reformed Dutch, Baptist, and some other dissenting churches, in the city of New York, were taken by the enemy, and used for public purposes, during the military occupation of that city, those belonging to the Church of England and to the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches were retained by their respective owners, and continued to be used for their legitimate purposes.

The association to which reference is made in the text was probably that known as "The Sons of Liberty," — a body which was purely *political* in its character, embracing members of nearly every religious sect and of varied political opinions. It was organized soon after the trial of Zenger in 1745 (*Lieut.-Gov. Colden to the Earl of Halifax*, 22d February, 1765); and, from that time until the breaking-out of the war in 1775, it wielded a great political influence throughout the continent. Indeed, its members were among the leaders of the colonists, both in the Revolution and in the war which succeeded it; and at a later period, in some of the States, the influence of the ancient association was felt, when, in 1787–8, the *Constitution for the United States* was offered to the several States for their approval and ratification.

Digitized by Google

III.

Page 366, lines 12–14: "*The shoots from the tree of Boston soon covered British America, and were destined later to cross the ocean.*"

It is not the purpose of this note to dispute with Boston the honor which has been awarded to that city by the distinguished author of this work: it is rather to speak in behalf of "the truth of history" concerning the leadership in the Revolution which separated thirteen peoples from their common sovereign and their common country.

It was not the policy of Massachusetts at any time to defend, except incidentally, the constitutional rights of any people but her own; nor did she ever base her opposition to the Crown on any thing but her own charter. Even in her opposition to the Stamp Act, her great leader admitted the "supremacy of Parliament" (Otis's *Rights of the British Colonies asserted and proved*, 3d Ed. pp. 49, 57; Otis's *Vindication of the British Colonies*, Ed. Boston, 1765, p. 21); in all of which she was fully sustained by Rhode Island and Connecticut.

New York, on the contrary, by the leader of her Sons of Liberty, declared for a separation from the mother-country (*Letter in New-York Gazette and Post-Boy*, No. 1157, March 7, 1765, etc.); and her Assembly, on the 18th of October, 1764, approved, and despatched to London, a memorial to the House of Commons, in which it demanded "an Exemption from the Burthen of ungranted, involuntary Taxes," and proceeded "to inform the Commons of Great Britain, that the People of this Colony, inspired by the Genius of their Mother-Country, nobly disdain the thought of claiming that Exemption as a *Privilege:* They found it on a Basis more honorable, solid, and stable; they challenge it, and glory in it, as their Right" (*Journal of the General Assembly*, Oct. 18, 1764).

On the same day, — six years before Massachusetts attempted to follow her example, — her General Assembly appointed the first of those bodies which were known as "Committees of Correspondence" (*Ibid.*), and which were described by a contemporary writer as "the foulest, subtlest, and most venomous serpents that ever issued from the eggs of sedition."

Three months before (July 10, 1764), her people had successfully resisted the encroachments on her marine by the royal navy, and compelled the officers of one of his Majesty's ships-of-war to release four fishermen whom they had impressed in the harbor of New York (*New-York Gazette and Post-Boy*, July 12, 1764); and, when the passage of the Stamp Act indicated a settled purpose of enforcing the obnoxious measure, her merchants organized the first "Non-Importation Association," and appointed the second "Committee of Correspondence" (*New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, No. 1192, Nov. 7, 1765; *Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, Nov. 11, 1765; *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, Nov. 11, 1765): while her people compelled the royal Lieutenant-Governor to surrender, at the gates of the fort, the boxes containing the stamped paper (*Minutes of the Common Council of New York*, Nov. 5, 1765); and the press of Massachusetts, bearing testimony to the backwardness of that colony, appealed to the merchants of Boston to follow the example which she had presented (*Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, Nov. 25, 1765).

The integrity of her merchants, in their respect for the agreement to abstain from the introduction into the colony of British goods, was most distinguished (*Returns of Exports to America*, in *Sons of Liberty in New York*, p. 87); and, when it became necessary to interpose force (January 18, 1770), the blood

Digitized by Google

of her inhabitants was first shed in behalf of the "rights of man" and of America (*New-York Journal*, No. 1417, Thursday, March 1, 1770; *Letter from New York*, dated Jan. 22, 1770, published in *The St. James Chronicle*, No. 1412, London, March 15, 1770; *Boston Chronicle*, Nos. 168 and 169, Feb. 5 and 8, 1770; *Letter in the Massachusetts Gazette*, Thursday, Feb. 1, 1770; *Lieut.-Gov. Colden's Despatch to the Home Government*, No. 9, New York, Feb. 21, 1770; Gordon's *American Revolution*, I. p. 300; Bancroft's *United States*, VI. p. 332).

At a subsequent date, when the tax on tea aroused the colonists to renewed opposition, the Sons of Liberty in New York were among the foremost in their opposition to the measure (Leake's *Life of Lamb*, 79, 80; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, Ed. 1855, pp. 28–32; Gordon's *American Revolution*, I. pp. 332–334); and, when the tea-ship arrived off the city of New York, she was not permitted to enter the harbor, and sought safety by returning to London.

About the same time, a ship came up to the city with eighteen chests of tea secreted in her hold, of which the Sons of Liberty had received notice from London; when the people, undisguised, and in open day, took possession of her, removed her cargo, seized the tea, emptied it into the harbor, and sent the captain of the ship to London, without his vessel, on board the tea-ship *Nancy*, which just then returned, as has been already stated (Gaines's *New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury*, No. 1174, Monday, April 25, 1774; Holt's *New-York Journal*, Nos. 1633 and 1634, Thursday, April 21 and 28, 1774; Gordon's *American Revolution*, I. pp. 333, 334; Bancroft's *United States*, VI. p. 525; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, Ed. 1855, pp. 28–32).

IV.

Page 366, lines 26–29: "*Associations were formed everywhere, the members of which pledged themselves to refuse all British products, at the price of whatever privation, until reparation was granted the colonies.*"

The earliest of these associations, of which we have any knowledge, was that which was formed by "the Merchants of the city of New York, trading to Great Britain," at a meeting which was held at Burns's Coffee-house on the evening of the 31st of October, 1765; and the "Retailers of Goods" in the same city entered into a similar agreement on the same day (Holt's *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, No. 1192, Thursday, Nov. 7, 1765; *Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, Monday, Nov. 11, 1765; Edes and Gill's *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, Nov. 11, 1765; *London Chronicle*, No. 1401, Dec. 12, 1765; Bancroft's *United States*, V. pp. 351, 352). A similar association was formed by "the Merchants and Traders" of Philadelphia on the seventh of November following (*Letter from Philadelphia*, dated Nov. 7, 1765, in *The London Chronicle*, No. 1407, Dec. 26, 1765; Holt's *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, No. 1194, Thursday, Nov. 21, 1765); and after considerable delay, and not without an urgent appeal to their pride (*Communication in The Boston Gazette*, Nov. 25, 1765), the merchants of Boston followed their example, on the ninth of December (Holt's *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, Extra, No. 1195, Dec. 27, 1765).

The movement soon became general; but it was very short-lived: and there are reasonable doubts concerning the fidelity with which the pledge was adhered to, — the imports of New England having been reduced only £8,465. 6s. 4d. in 1765, and £31,884. 1s. in 1766; while those of New York, the most faithful of the thirteen colonies, were reduced only £133,067. 1s. in 1765,

Digitized by Google

and £49,481. 4s. in 1766; while the Carolinas and Georgia largely *increased* their imports in 1765; and Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia, those of 1766 (*Sons of Liberty in New York*, p. 87, note).

V.

Page 366, lines 31–34: "*They did more; they prevented the landing and distribution of the stamped paper; and, the administration of civil justice and commerce being thus suspended in point of fact, the Assembly of Massachusetts boldly see itself up in opposition to the English Parliament, and authorized the citizens to dispense with the stamp in business transactions.*"

In this sentence, more than one subject has been referred to, which needs notice.

While it may be true, that, in some of the colonies, the stamps were not landed from the vessels which had brought them to America, it is not so in all cases.

Those which were sent to New York, for instance, were *landed* without opposition, and deposited in the fort; but they were not *distributed*, nor were they allowed to leave the fort, except in the manner in which the Sons of Liberty approved, and to the persons in whose integrity they had entire confidence, after the issue of a call for the inhabitants to meet, *armed*, for the purpose of seizing them. They were surrenderod at the gate of the fort, by the King's Lieutenant-Governor and by the General-in-Chief of the King's forces in America, to the corporation of the city of New York, by whom they were receipted for, and finally disposed of (*Lieut.-Gov. Colden to Secretary Conway*, Nov. 5, 1765; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, Ed. 1855, pp. 11, 12; *Lieut.-Gov. Colden to the Lords of Trade*, Dec. 6, 1765; *MS. Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, Nov. 5, 1765).

The General Court, or Colonial Assembly, of Massachusetts, authorized the residents of *that colony* only, "to dispense with the stamp in business transactions." That body possessed no authority whatever beyond the boundaries of that colony; and no other person than a resident of that colony pretended to recognize its authority, or obeyed its orders. The several colonies were entirely independent bodies; and at the period referred to, in the language of Mr. Bancroft, "the eye of the whole continent watched with the intensest anxiety the conduct of New York, the capital of the central province, and headquarters of the standing forces in America" (*History*, Ed. 1852, V. p. 331; see also *Gov. Bernard to the Lords of Trade*, July 7, 1766).

In the consideration of all questions concerning the history of the United States, particularly concerning their political history, there is no subject which possesses more importance than the entirely distinct and separate organization and government of the several colonies, and their entirely separate and very often diverse action on the great questions of the day. Each colony was separate and distinct from all the others in every respect; and, in its subordination to the King and the Parliament, each was accountable directly, and not through any other. This peculiar condition of the colonies was continued until nearly the close of the War of the Revolution; and not until the 1st of March, 1781, was there any bond of union between them, except the bond of common danger from a common foe, and that of a common desire to gain a common security. *The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union*, which took effect on that

Digitized by Google

day, secured, for the first time, the *legal* union of the States; and thenceforth the thirteen were *confederated* States.

VI.

Page 367, lines 6, 7: "*The Assembly of New York refused. It was suspended by act of Parliament until it should have obeyed.*"

Referring to the "Act for restraining and prohibiting the Governor, Council, and House of Representatives, of the Province of New York, until provision shall have been made for furnishing the King's troops with all the necessaries required by law, from passing or assenting to any Act of Assembly, Vote, or Resolution, for any other purpose;" passed in the Parliament in the spring of 1767.

VII.

Page 368, lines 5–7: "*The first blood shed at Boston, March 5, 1770, in an affray between the soldiers and the people, seemed to gush forth afresh throughout America.*"

Like many other features of the Revolutionary struggle, "the first blood shed" has been unwarrantably distorted by many of our writers and book-makers, evidently for the promotion of the extraordinary but systematic pretensions of Massachusetts to priority in the cause of the Republic, and to superior importance in the family of States. While this evil spirit of rivalship between the several States should be condemned as pernicious, if not positively destructive of the best interests of the Union, it is proper, in view of its mischievous effects abroad, as seen in the pages of this work, to oppose it with the truth, simple and unadorned, but not unsustained, and to leave the result of that exposition to the candor and good sense of the reader.

On the 13th, 15th, and 16th of January, 1770, the soldiery composing the garrison in the city of New York made desperate attempts to destroy the Liberty-pole which the Sons of Liberty had erected on the Common, now the Park, in that city; and, at a very early hour on the latter day, they succeeded not only in prostrating it, but in sawing it into pieces, and piling it in front of Montanye's Tavern, the headquarters of the Sons of Liberty (Holt's *New-York Journal*, No. 1411, Jan. 18, 1770; Gordon's *American Revolution*, I. p. 436; Dunlap's *History of New York*, I. p. 300).

On the following day (January 17), pursuant to a public call, the inhabitants, to the number of three thousand persons, assembled around the stump of the prostrated Liberty-pole; and measures were adopted to erect another pole, to compel the soldiers to remain within their barracks after evening roll-call, and to prevent the employment of them by the inhabitants in menial services (Holt's *New-York Journal*, No. 1412, Jan. 25, 1770; Dunlap's *History of New York*, I. pp. 436, 437; Bancroft's *History*, Ed. 1854, pp. 331, 332).

On the 19th, scurrilous hand-bills, signed "*Sixteenth Regiment*," were posted about the city; and three soldiers, who were engaged in that service near the Fly Market, were seized by Isaac Sears and Walter Quackenbos, members of the Sons of Liberty; and, after a sharp contest, two of them were carried to the Mayor's office.

An attempt was made, by some of the associates of the prisoners, to rescue them; but Captain Richardson and the citizens kept them at bay until a re-

Digitized by Google

enforcement of twenty men from the lower barracks, at the fort, came to the assistance of the assailants. These drew their bayonets and swords, while the citizens seized the stakes and "rungs" from the carts and sleighs which were in the vicinity; and each party sullenly prepared for the contest, and each seems to have sent messengers to its friends for additional forces.

At this moment the Mayor and Alderman Desbrosses appeared, and ordered the soldiers to return to their barracks; when they reluctantly retired. When they had reached Golden Hill (now John Street, between Cliff Street and Burling Slip), they met the reënforcement for which they had sent; and, under the control of one who is supposed from his dress to have been an officer in disguise, the united forces turned, and made a furious attack on the magistrates and a large body of burghers by whom they were followed. A desperate fight ensued; and not until the superior officers of the garrison came on the ground, and ordered the soldiers to retire, was the "battle" closed.

In this affray, known to the present generation as "THE BATTLE OF GOLDEN HILL," both the soldiery and burghers suffered severely. Among the latter, Francis Field, a Friend, was wounded in the cheek while standing at his own door; several others were severely wounded; one was killed with a bayonet; and a sailor was cut down: the former were very severely handled, many of them were disarmed, and all were badly beaten.

On the following day (January 20), the contest was renewed, at the head of Beekman Street, between a party of soldiers and one of sailors; and, when the Mayor appeared, his orders were entirely disregarded. The populace hastened to the assistance of the sailors; but the soldiery retired to their barracks when they saw the determined spirit with which they were opposed.

In the afternoon of the same day, a number of burghers who were assembled on the Common, opposite the new Jail, — immediately eastward from the present City Hall, — were attacked by another party of soldiers; but the latter were so severely handled, that they never ventured to renew the contest.

The most intense excitement prevailed throughout the city; and the despatches of the colonial authorities to the Home Government, the newspaper-press of that period both in Europe and America, the standard historical authorities of the earlier days of the Republic, to say nothing of the more recent historical writers who have made the local history of New York a specialty, bear ample testimony to the importance of the event, and present the silence concerning it, of those American writers who assume to write on the history of their country, for the judgment of all just men.

Those who are curious to inquire concerning this subject are referred to *Lieut.-Gov. Colden's Despatch to the Earl of Hillsborough*, No. 9, 21st February, 1770, — Colden MSS., New-York Historical Society's Library; the volume of "Broadsides" in the same collection; Holt's *New-York Journal*, No. 1437, Thursday, March 1, 1770; *The Boston Chronicle*, Nos. 168 and 169, Feb. 5 and 8, 1770; *Letter*, dated "New York, Jan. 22, 1770," published in *The St. James Chronicle, or British Evening Post*, No. 1412, London, March 15, 1770; Gordon's *History of American Revolution*, I. p. 300; Dunlap's *History of New York*, I. p. 437; Bancroft's *United States*, Ed. 1854, VI. p. 332; *Reminiscences of the Park and its Vicinity*, pp. 60–62; Leake's *Life of Lamb*, pp. 55–58; Dawson's *Sons of Liberty*, Ed. 1859, pp. 112–117; Booth's *History of New York*, pp. 448–453, etc.

Digitized by Google

VIII.

Page 368, lines 21–24: "*The Massachusetts Assembly explicitly denied to the two houses the right of making laws for the colonies. It was the first time that the supremacy of the Parliament had been rejected in express and general terms. The legal resistance tended to become revolution* (1772)."

In 1744, when Lieutenant-Governor Clarke of New York proposed to tax the colonies by means of stamped paper, the royal governor Clinton, of the same colony, informed the ministry that "the People in North America are quite strangers to any duty but such as they raise themselves; and, was such a scheim to take *place without their knowledge, it might prove a dangerous consequence to His Majesty's interest" (Gov. Clinton to Duke of Newcastle*, New York, 18th December, 1744).

"The General Assembly of this Colony have no desire to derogate from the Power of the Parliament of Great Britain: but they cannot avoid deprecating the Loss of such Rights as they have hitherto enjoyed; Rights established in the first Dawn of our Constitution, founded upon the most substantial Reasons, confirmed by invariable Usage, conducive to the best Ends; never abused to bad Purposes, and with the Loss of which, Liberty, Property, and all the Benefits of Life, tumble into Insecurity and Ruin: Rights, the Deprivation of which will dispirit the People, abate their Industry, discourage Trade, introduce Discord, Poverty, and Slavery; or, by depopulating the Colonies, turn a vast, fertile, prosperous Region into a dreary Wilderness; impoverish Great Britain; and shake the Power and Independency of the most opulent and flourishing Empire in the World" (*Memorial of the Assembly of New York to the House of Commons*, Oct. 18, 1764, — *Journal of the Assembly* of that date).

"The great fundamental principles of government should be common to all its parts and members, else the whole will be endangered. If, then, the interests of the mother-country and her colonies cannot be made to coincide; if the same constitution may not take place in both; if the welfare of the mother-country necessarily requires a sacrifice of *the most natural rights of the colonies*, — THEIR RIGHT OF MAKING THEIR OWN LAWS, AND DISPOSING OF THEIR OWN PROPERTY BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING, — if such is really the case between Great Britain and her colonies, *then the connection between them* OUGHT TO CEASE; *and sooner or later it must inevitably cease.* The English government cannot long act towards a part of its dominions upon principles diametrically opposed to its own, without losing itself in the slavery it would impose upon the colonies, or leaving them to throw it off, and assert their own freedom (*Essays, signed* "FREEMAN," *in the New-York Journal*, June, 1765).

Contrast these sentiments with what appears to have been the conclusions of the learned author respecting the priority of the claim of colonial independence of the Parliament of Great Britain.

IX.

Page 378, Note 3: This note is calculated to mislead the reader concerning *the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union* which were reported in secret session to the Congress, *not published*, on the 20th of August, 1776, and agreed to by that body on the 15th of November, 1777; but they were not *approved by the several States*, and therefore they remained inoperative, until

Digitized by Google

the 1st of March, 1781 (*Secret Journals of the Congress*, vol. "History of the Confederation").

Until the latter date, the States were not even confederated; nor was there any such body, in law, as "The United States of America." Hence the variety of names which was applied to the aggregate body, — "the Thirteen united States," "the United States of North America," etc.

X.

Page 379, lines 12–14: "*Despite their courage and the military talents of their leader, the American militia succumbed before the discipline of the Anglo-Germans.*"

The "leader" referred to is assumed to have been General Washington; but the discipline of the enemy had less to do with the disaster at Brooklyn than the ignorant, self-conceited inefficiency of General Israel Putnam, who held the immediate command of that post.

The limits assigned to these notes will not permit an extended examination of this subject; and the reader is referred to Dawson's *Battles of the United States*, First Edition, I. pp. 148–150, and to the authorities which are referred to therein, for further particulars concerning it.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FEB 19 1895
MAR 28 1895
JUN 8 1895
DEC 1 1900
DEC 12 1900
JAN 29 1902
DEC 22 1905
JA 6 1906
DUE DEC 9 1927
MAY 1939